Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ

4

藤島康介

KOSUKE FUJISHIMA

Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 4

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DARK HORSE MANGA™

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CHAPTER 24

The Flying Motor Club

IN THE LAST DAYS OF WORLD WAR II, THE JAPANESE NAVY WORKED TO DEVELOP AN EXPERIMENTAL FIGHTER PLANE TO INTERCEPT AMERICAN B-29 BOMBERS. IT WAS CALLED THE ***SHINDEN.***

THE *SHINDEN*, OR "MAGNIFICENT LIGHTNING," FEATURED AN UNUSUAL REAR-WING, PUSHER-PROP CONFIGURATION.

BUT ITS FIRST TEST FLIGHT CAME LESS THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE JAPAN'S SURRENDER-- AND HENCE IT NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO PROVE ITSELF IN BATTLE.

...IT REMINDS ME OF FLYING MY GRANDPA'S PLANE...

TODAY THE ONLY KNOWN REMAINING *SHINDEN* IS HOUSED AT THE NATIONAL AIR & SPACE MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

WAKE UP, FOOL!

IT DIDN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE THE *SHINDEN* ...BUT THE BLUE SKY WAS THE SAME...

YEAH... HE EVEN LET ME TAKE THE CONTROLS A FEW TIMES...

SO? FIND A LAWN-MOWER!

DIRT CHEAP

VE WON'T BE UNDERSOLD!!

CAR SALE

THIS THING DON'T GOT NO ENGINE!

ONLY *TEN DAYS* T' DA NEXT *CAMPUS FESTIVAL!!* WE NEED TA *ADVERTISE!*

...TRY NOT TA *PUKE,* AN' GET OUT DERE AN' *SPREAD DA WORD!*

SO PUT ON DIS *MOLDY, STINKIN'* OLD *COS-TUME...*

NITMEG

UM...

DON'T MAKE ME GO IN THERE! HEAVE! RETCH!

!!

I THINK IT LOOKS GREAT. WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

WE THOUGHT WE'D TRY TO COLOR-COORDINATE OUR OUTFITS-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?

wheeze!

choke!

ALERT!!
ALERT!!

STOMPA
STOMPA
STOMPA

STABBED US IN THE BACK !!

AOSHIMA... HAS *BETRAYED* US!

N.I.T. F.W.C.

NEKOMI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLO
FOUR WHEELS CLU
入会受け付け中

NOW WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS... IT'S THE NEKOMI TECH FOUR WHEELS CLUB *PRE-FESTIVAL SIGN-UP!*

NIT FWC
SIGN UP HERE!

KOENIG

PRINTED BY HOLBEIN & EXEN.

SO SIGN YOUR NAME ON THIS *SIMPLE* MEMBER-SHIP FORM...

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
NAME:
CLASS:
DEPT:
AGE:
SEX: M F
I, _____,
HEREBY SELL MY SOUL TO THE N.I.T. YOUR WHEELS CLUB.
SIGNED:

BUT IF YOU THINK OUR *GIRLS* LOOK GOOD... JUST LOOK AT OUR ***CARS!***

UNLIKE *CERTAIN* PATHETIC MOTOR CLUBS WE COULD MENTION...

...OUR CLUB HAS EVEN ***MORE*** CUTE GIRLS!!

TAMIYA! *HEY! NO! THAT'S WRONG!*

huff huff

MUST... SELL...SOUL...

HEH-HEH-HEH.

GET IN LINE!!

NO ME!

ME FIRST!

YOUR CLUB'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED, AND YOU *KNOW* IT!

THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS... *MARCH FORTH!*

YES, *SIR!!*

AT EASE, TROOPS!!

SO KEEP THINKIN' O' *IDEAS!* USE YUH *BRAIN!*

REMEMBER DA MOTOR CLUB *MOTTO-- "GREAT DEEDS IS DONE WIT' NO BUDGET"!*

DAT'S RIGHT! JUST LIKE *I* DO!

BRAINS! BRAINS! BRAINS!

THEN I CAN FINALLY WREST BELLDANDY FROM YOUR GRUBBY CLUTCHES...

...AND INTO *MY* GRUBBY CLUTCHES!!

YEAH... WE MAY NOT HAVE MONEY, BUT WE HAVE *GODDESSES!*

YOU NOTICED?! I *TELL* YOU-- NO BUNCHA LITTLE COED CHICKIES ARE GONNA UPSTAGE *ME!!*

JUST WAIT AND *SEE!*

A-ARE YOU GONNA WEAR THAT HOME?

WHY *NOT?* I THINK IT LOOKS *GOOD* ON ME!

GOOD LOOKS, BUT NOT GOOD LUCK...

BR MBL

LET 'ER RIP!!

BE

WHAT? I DON'T REMEMBER OUR CLUBHOUSE BEIN' LIKE *DIS!!*

THE NEXT DAY

DID WE HAVE A *PARTY* LAST NITE OR SUMTIN'?

thmp

Heed My Voice and Answer!

...O Buried Treasure!

Make Thyself Known to Me...

DERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHIN' LEFT WE CAN USE!

DIG! DIG FOR SAL-VAGE!

FOR WHAT? LAND-FILL...?

SAY WHUT ?!

WAIT-- THERE'S SOME-THING BURIED RIGHT HERE!

Here... Here I am...

CHOKCHOK

BRTTTTT

THMP THMP

WE'RE NOW THE "DAY LABOR-ERS" CLUB...

YOU *HEARD* DA CHICK! *DIG* DIS CRAZY SCENE!

描実

CHAK CHAK

WHAT THE... HOLY CRAP!!

IT'S A *MYSTERI-OUS OBJECT! LIFT!!*

HA! HOW COME IT DON'T GOT NO PROP ON FRONT, THEN?

...A SHIN-DEN!!

I..I DON'T *BELIEVE* IT!! IT'S... IT'S...

BUT WAIT A SEC...THE CAMPUS *WAS* BUILT ON THE SITE OF AN OLD NAVAL AIR STATION...

ON THE *BACK*, TAMIYA... THE *SHINDEN* HAD A PROP ON THE BACK...

Speak to Me.

Why Are You Here?

Why Were You Buried?

...B-BUT THE ONLY *SHINDEN'S* SUPPOSED TO BE IN *AMERICA* !!

I am *Shinden II*, the second prototype. I was made to soar through the sky...

...But I was deprived of my destiny...

My makers hid me deep within the earth...

...before I ever had the chance.

DAT'S *IT!!*

Kyaa!

...LET'S GIVE THE *SHINDEN* A CHANCE!

HUH ?!

KEIICHI...

I beg thee, let me fly.

SO IT'S SUMDIN' DA FOUR WHEELS CLUB *CAN'T BUY!*

DIS PLANE IS DA *ONLY ONE* OUTSIDE A MUSEUM, RIGHT?!

WE GET DIS THING FLYIN', WE'LL BE DA WONDER A DA' CAMPUS!

DAT'S RIGHT! DEY'LL *WONDER* ABOUT US!

mo·tor ve·hi·cle (*n.*) a wheeled transport commonly propelled by an internal combustion engine.

PSHAW! CONSULT DA *DICTION-ARY!*

I DUNNO, TAMIYA... WE'RE A *MOTOR VEHICLE* CLUB, NOT A FLYING CLUB.

IT'S GOT WHEELS AND AN ENGINE!

YEAH! HOW YOU LIKE *THEM* APPLES!

HMMM! EXCELLENT POINT!

...*NOR* AN ENGINE.

EXCEPT IT'S GOT *NEITHER* WHEELS...

DIG IT, MAN!

WELL DEN, BACK TA SUMTIN' WE *KNOW* WE'RE GOOD AT-- ***DITCH DIGGIN'!***

WAIT !!

YOU WON'T GET ANYWHERE JUST DIGGING AT RANDOM...

twtch

twtch

DON'T WORRY...THE *SHINDEN* SAYS *ALL* OF HIS PARTS ARE HIDDEN ELSEWHERE NEARBY.

twtch twtch

twtch

HERE!

WHOA! ***DOWSIN'***, EH?

Wings, Wings...

GOOD LUCK!

MEN! WE SEEK OUT BURIED TREASURE!

WANTED!! A CUTE GUY TO BE OUR MANAGER

EASY WORK!
GOOD PAY!
♡PRETTY GIRLS♡
☆LOTSA FUN!

WE'RE WAITING!

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL CLUB

°OCTOBER 3-18
°RAIN OR SHINE
COME CHEER US TO VICTORY!

KNOCK BEFORE ENTERING

um

STOR
KEEP

um

?

WHAT'S ALL THAT GRUNTING OUT BACK?

CHIMPS? GORILLAS?

NO

OUR *FUTURE*, MUCH LIKE DA *PRETTY FLOWER*, LIES AS A SEED BURIED IN DA GROUND! SO *DIG!*

UH... HERE? SURELY, WE CAN'T DIG *HERE!*

HEY, WE WEREN'T LOOK-ING!!

for once!

DEN DIG WE *MUST!*

THE ENGINE'S *HERE.*

AND THE MOTOR CLUB BECAME KNOWN AS THE "CRATER CORPS."

AARGHH! LOOK WHAT THEY DID TO OUR *SCHOOL'S FOUNDING FATHERS!!*

AND SO, SOON THE ENTIRE CAMPUS WAS COVERED IN PITS...

OR THE *LANDING GEAR...*

YEAH. EXCEPT THE INSTRUMEN-TATION...

I THINK WE GOT EVERY-THING.

YEAH, YOUSE GOT FAR *BIGGER* WORRIES, MORISATO! LIKE YOUR *TRAIN-ING!*

HUH ?!

BUT *DON'T WORRY,* YOU CAN LEAVE THOSE LITTLE DETAILS TO *US!*

...*SHIN-DEN.*

...YOU'LL BE FLYING SOON...

I SENSE THAT SOMEHOW HE'LL DO FINE.

HA-HA! WHAT *FOR,* HE SAYS! FOR DA *SHINDEN,* OF COURSE!

shiver

T-T-TRAIN-ING...? WHAT FOR?!

shiver

SO? WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS! *WE'LL* NEVER TELL!

B-BUT I DON'T HAVE A PILOT'S LICENSE!

NO! HELP!!!!

BELL-DANDYYY !!

AEEEEEEE

YOU CAN TRUST THEM TO MAKE YOU FLY.

...BUT THEY DON'T GIVE UP ON A CHALLENGE.

PERHAPS THEY *ARE* A LITTLE STRANGE...

They don't exactly seem to have, y'know, the right stuff.

*Are you **sure** about those guys?*

NO, REALLY. IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

Maybe I'd better just go back and hide in the dirt for a few more decades?

SEZ HERE DA *ASTRO-NAUTS* DO IT!

WAS *THAT* REALLY NECESSARY?

WELL, AT LEAST A HIDEOUS CRASH WILL LIVEN UP THE FESTIVAL!

AIEEEEEEE

LISTEN TO THEM.

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE ACTUALLY PLANNING TO TRY AND FLY THAT HEAP.

EVEN FOR *LUNATICS*, THEY'RE LUNATICS.

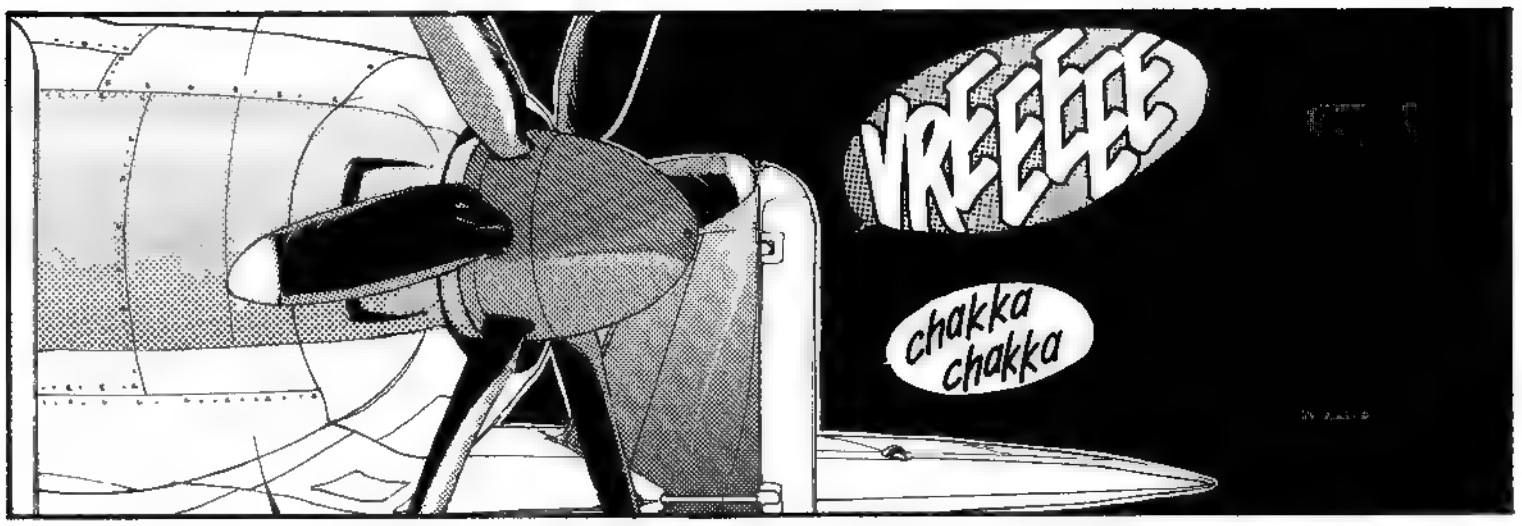
NEW MEMBERS ARE ***ALSO*** ALLOWED ONE FREE ***OGLE!***

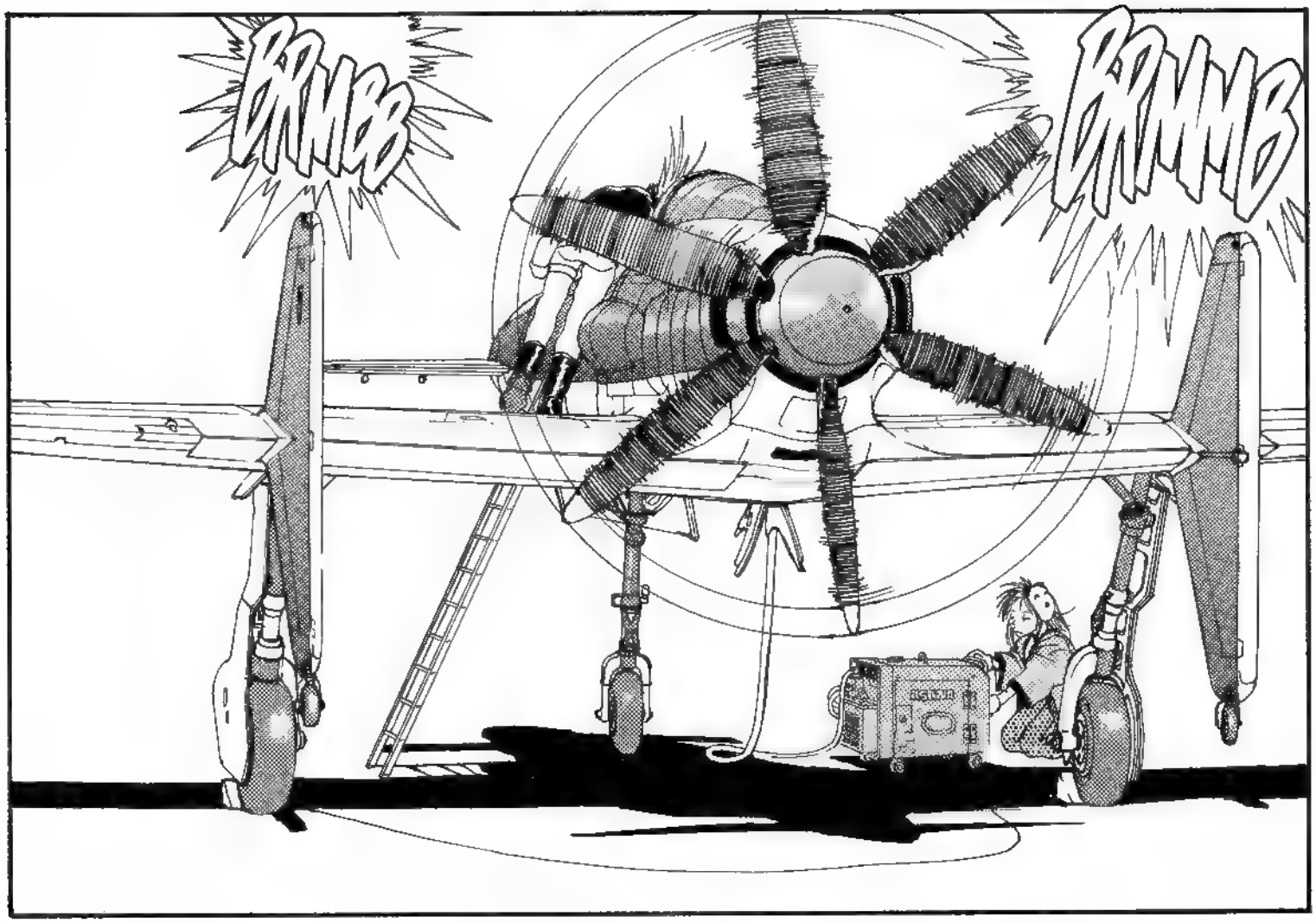
THE NEXT DAY

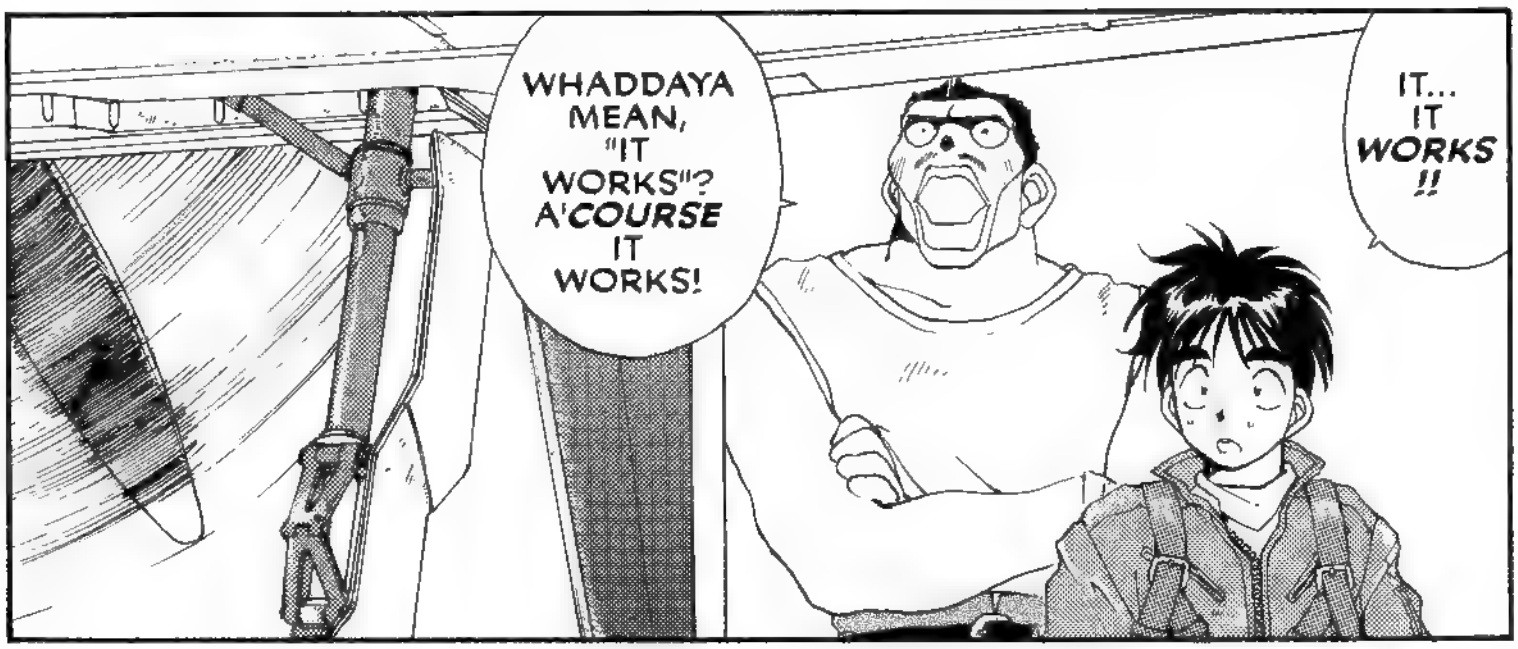
36TH NEKOMI FESTIVAL

THE AMAZING SHINDEN FIGHTER FLIES AGAIN!

ADMISSION ¥200-


VREEEEE
chakka
chakka


BRMBB
BRMMB


WHADDAYA MEAN, "IT WORKS"? A'COURSE IT WORKS!
IT... IT WORKS !!

HE'S A *MORON*, YES...BUT NO ONE COULD DENY HIS *COURAGE!*

Krnch Krnch

I ADMIT WE *GUESSED* ONNA FEW PARTS, AN'...

WHERE YOU GOIN', MORISATO?

!!

MAN, I'M DOOMED. JUST BECAUSE I FLEW A PLANE STRAIGHT AND LEVEL *TEN YEARS AGO...*

...DOESN'T MEAN I KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT *TAKING OFF!*

KEIICHI!

IF YOU GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO FLY...

...I'M *SURE* HE'LL HELP YOU OUT!

TAKE GOOD CARE OF THE *SHINDEN!*

HOW CAN I REFUSE... A MISSION FROM A *GODDESS?!*

LEAVE IT TO ME, BELL-DANDY!

Pat

....

BRAAAAAAA

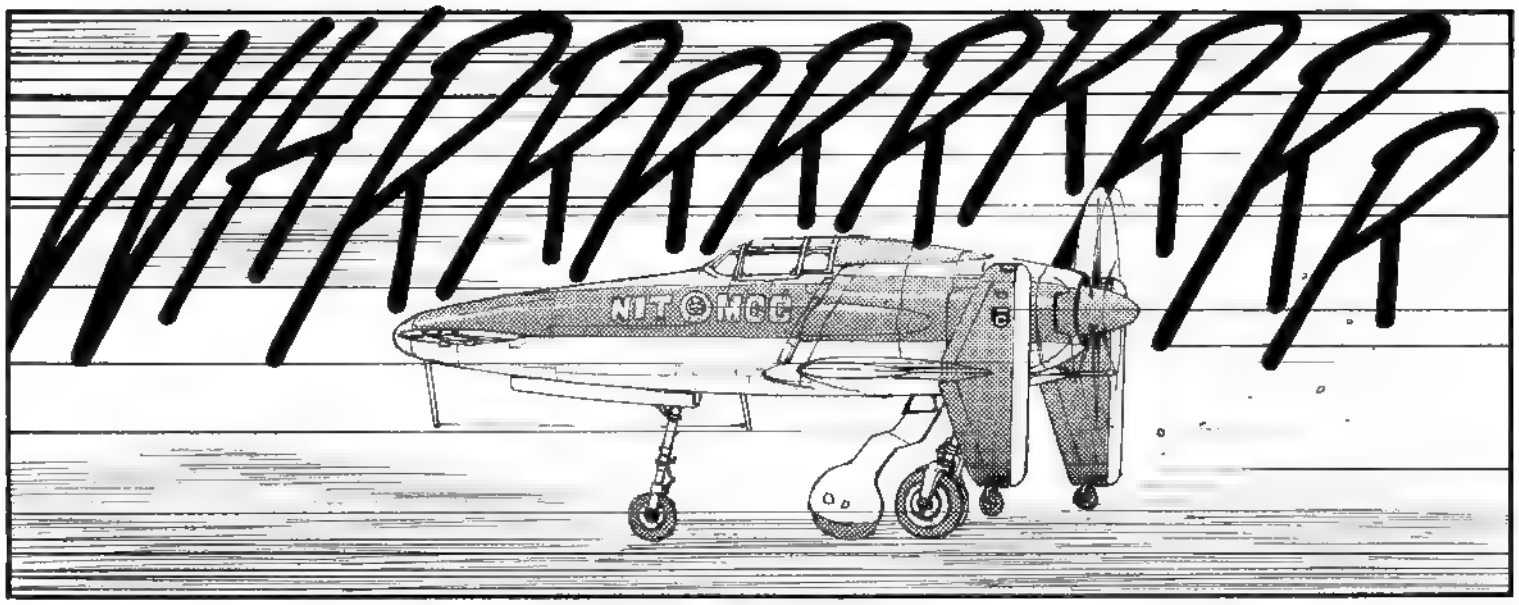
LET'S GO, SHIN-DEN!!

chak

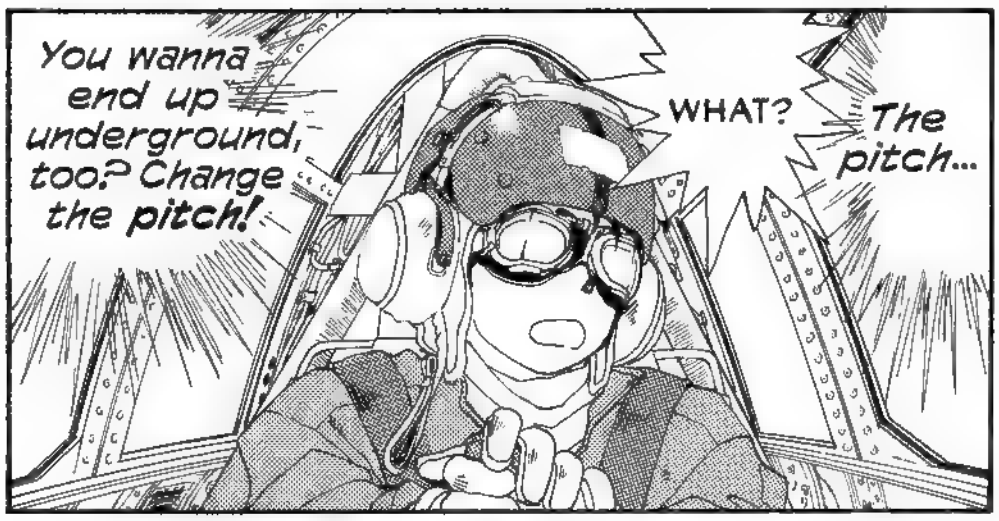
OKAY, THEN...

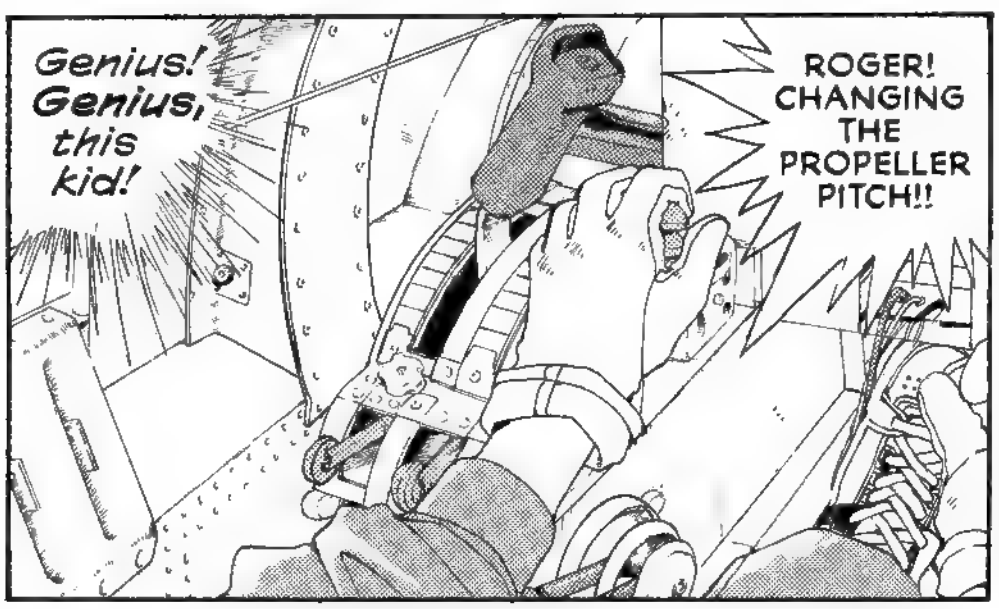
WELL... AT LEAST I CAN READ THEM...

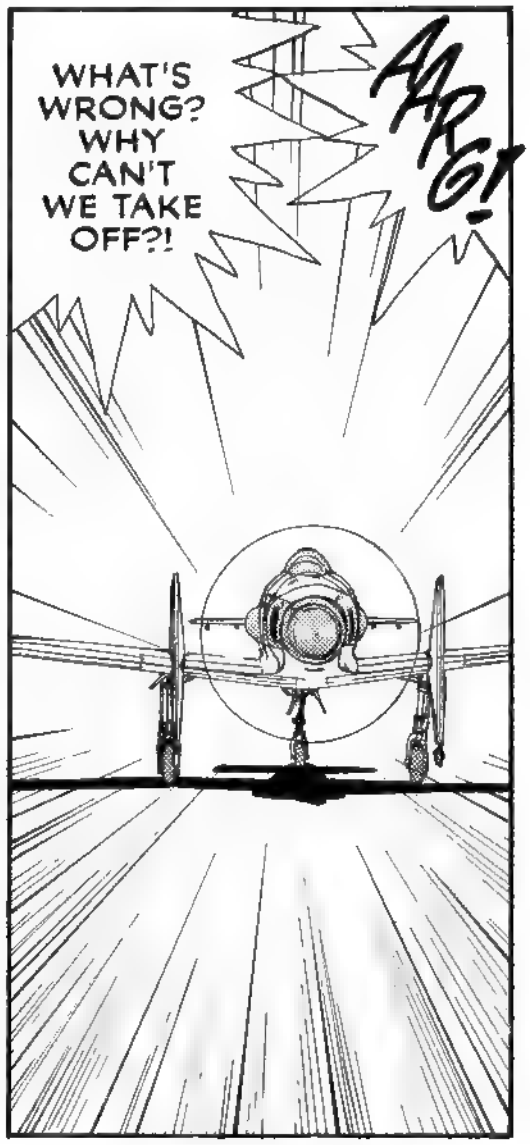
GREAT... THEY JUST BOLTED ON A BUNCH OF *MOTOR-CYCLE* AND *TRUCK* GAUGES...


WHRRRRRRRRR
NIT ©MCG

...HE'S SURE EATIN' UP A LOTTA *RUNWAY,* AIN'T HE?
HEY, UH...


You wanna end up underground, too? Change the **pitch!**
WHAT?
The pitch...


Genius! **Genius,** this kid!
ROGER! CHANGING THE PROPELLER PITCH!!

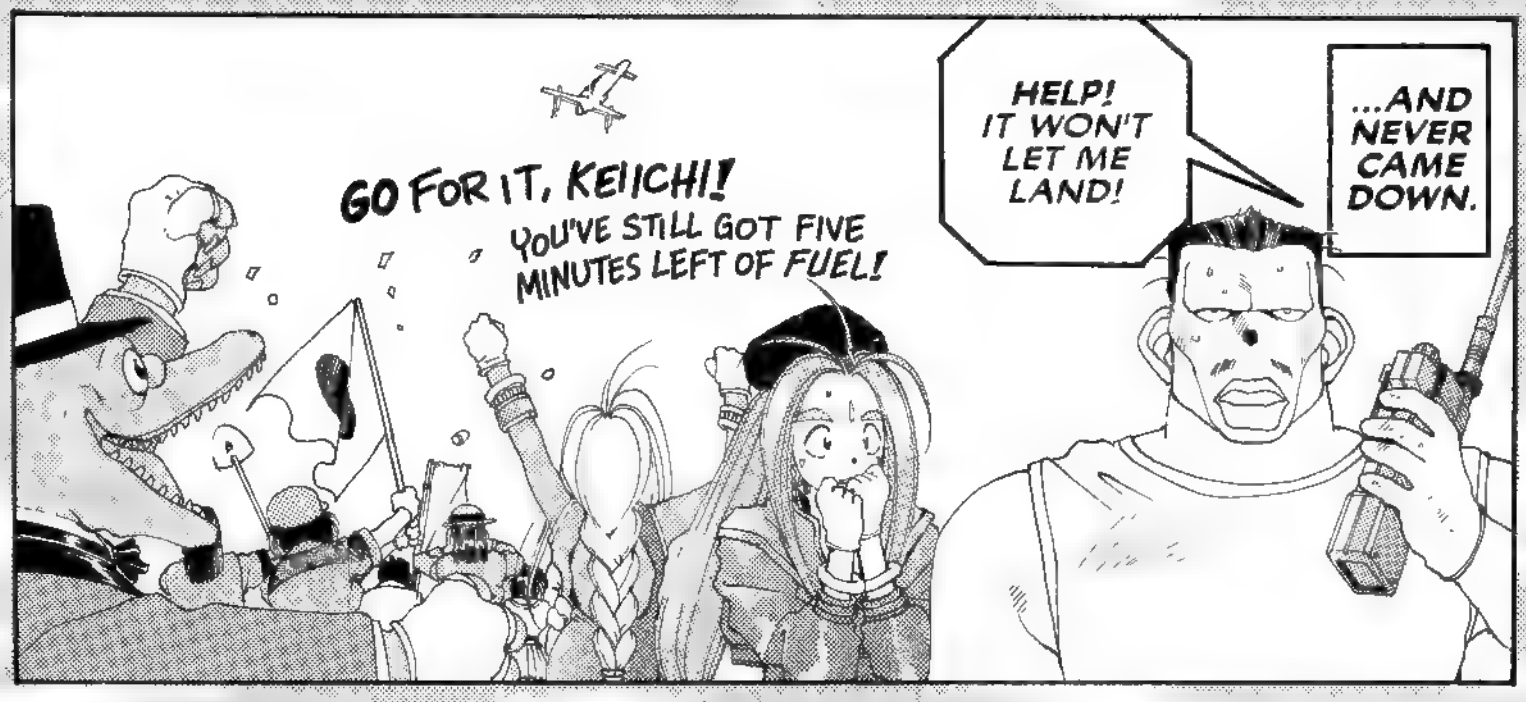

WHAT'S WRONG? WHY CAN'T WE TAKE OFF?!
AARG!

skff

FLY, SHINDEN! AND CARRY OUR DREAMS WITH YOU...

ZEEE

THE SHINDEN'S GREEN FUSELAGE SHIMMERED IN JOY... AS IT SOARED INTO THE CLEAR BLUE SKY...



THE ADVENTURES OF MINI-URD

PART 2

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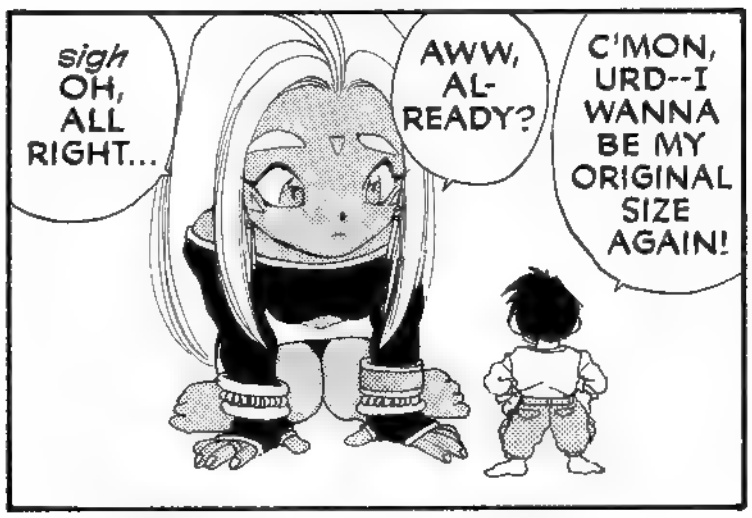

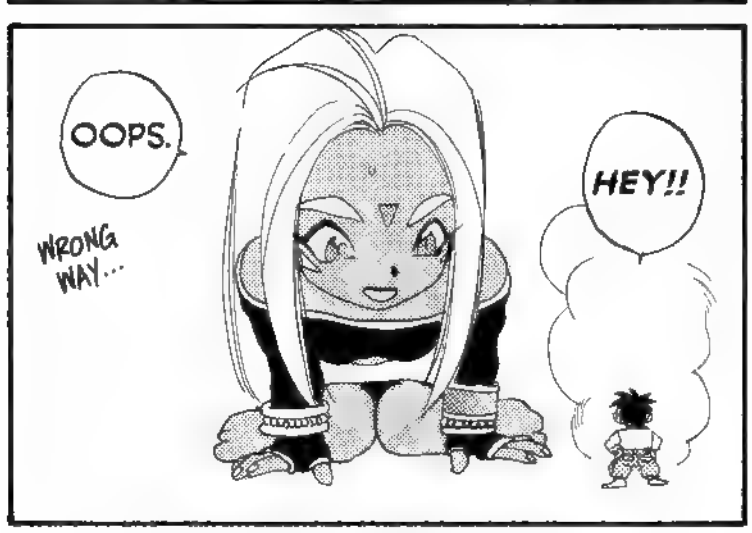

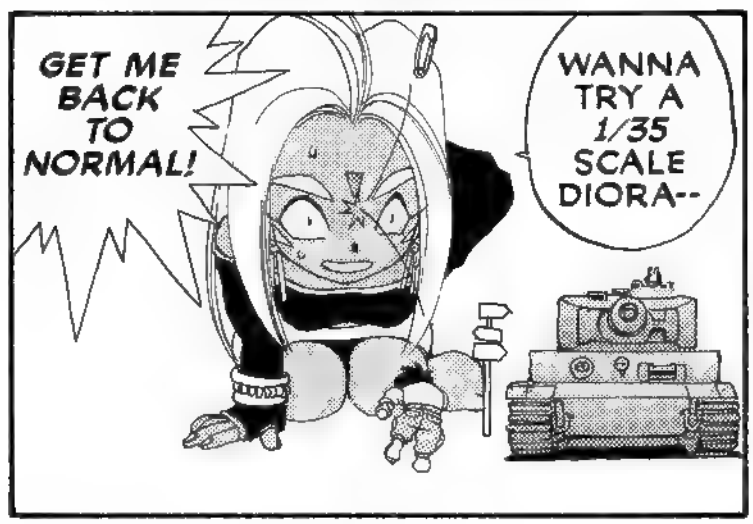

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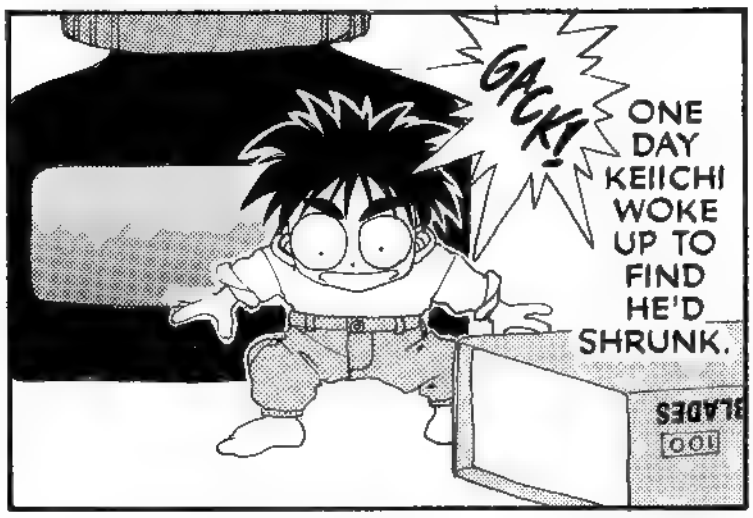
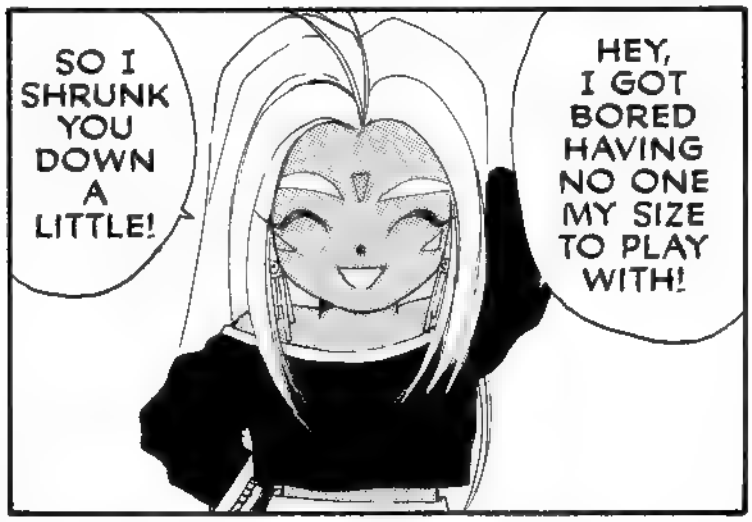
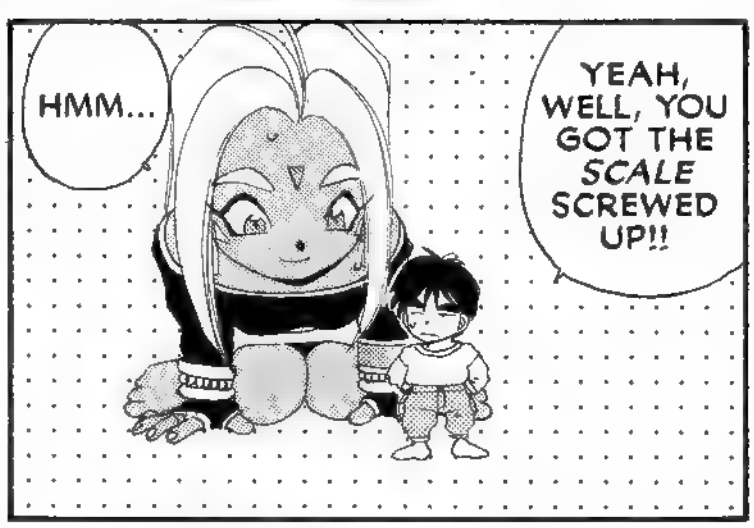
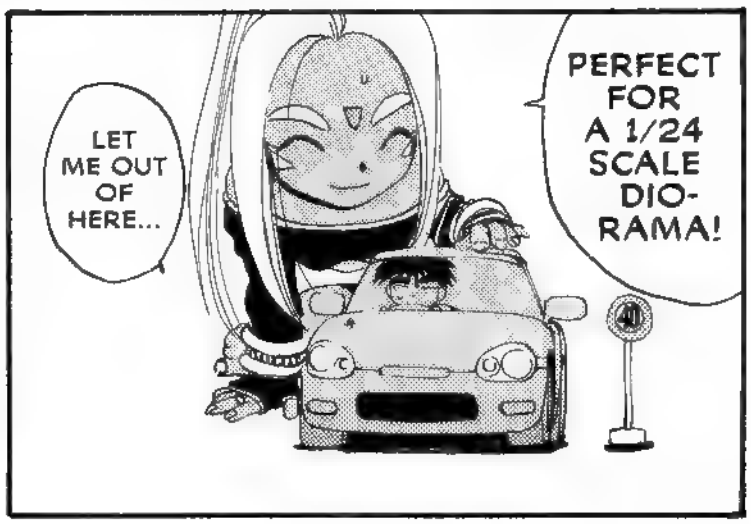








SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

....

HEH...

The Flower of Love is Crimson...

FWSSH

The Nectar of Love is Sweet...

Boil, Boil, O Nectar of Love!

Bloom, Bloom, O Flower of Love!

Entwine in Passionate Embrace and Form the SEEDS OF LOVE!

CHAPTER 25

Let's Take the Love Seeds

Appear Now in My Hand!!

BOMF!

Pop

I CAN HARDLY *WAIT!!!*

...HE AND BELLDANDY WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP THEIR HANDS *OFF* EACH OTHER!

URD

HEE-HEE-*HEE...*

IF I CAN JUST GET KEIICHI TO TAKE *THIS...*

WHAT-CHA-*DOON?*

YO, URD!

OKAY... THE SEED IS IN THE TEA...

SSHH

...WOULD YOU LIKE SOME *TEA?*

HEY YYY...

APE? MONKEY? YETI? OH, WAIT.. HE'S ONE OF KEIICHI'S BUDDIES. HMMM...

?

WHO ARE--

shloop shloop shloop

...I GUESS HE'LL COUNT AS A HUMAN TEST SUBJECT!

GLUG!

but

but

but

SURE!!

UM, DUHHHH... YEAH!

GRAB!

but...

HEY... IT'S NOT AFFECT-ING HIM AT ALL!

TASTY!

OH, WELL... AT LEAST I'VE STILL GOT A CUP FULL.

um...

WELL, UH, THAT IS...

AIN'TCHA GONNA HAVE SOME, URD?

HEY, LOOK!!

WHAT WAS THAT?!

BLAM!

GULP!

NO! STOP!!

I THOUGHT SO!!

fsssshhh

THE SMOKE... IT'S *PINK!!*

MUTTER MUTTER

UH-OH! OUR FELLOW STU-DENTS!

muh

WHAT WAS IN THE TEA, SIS? IT WAS *LOVE SEEDS*, WASN'T IT?!

THERE!

WHAT CAUSED IT?

A MYSTE-RIOUS EXPLO-SION!

C'MON... WHILE WE STILL GOT A *SCAPE-GOAT!!*

TAMIYA!

OBVIOUSLY, HE MUST BE TO BLAME!

THAT EXPLAINS IT!

SO, WHAT EXACTLY *ARE* THESE "LOVE SEEDS"?

BUT YOU GIVE IT TO *ANOTHER* PERSON... WHY WOULD ***SHE*** DRINK IT?

yeh

IT INFLAMES DESIRE...IN THE CASE OF HER FORMULA, ACTIVATED BY THE USE OF CERTAIN WORDS OR IMAGES...

ACTUALLY, ***I*** KNEW WHAT IT MEANT... I WAS JUST KIND OF SURPRISED THAT ***YOU*** DID...

WELL, THE SHORT ANSWER IS...

...IT'S A KIND OF APHRO-DISIAC.

?

uh huh

WHO *CARES* ?!

A-A-*APHRO-DISIAC?*

HO HO HO!

THINK! IF ***SHE*** LATCHES HERSELF ONTO SOME GUY... MAYBE SHE'LL FINALLY LEAVE ***US*** ALONE!

HUH ?!

WELL, I GUESS AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T **HURT** ANYONE (*how likely is that?*), AND IF IT MAKES URD **HAPPY** (*via the use of drugs*)...

BUT *WHERE?*

SHE'S GONE!

URD?

PLUM BLOSSOMS...

WHAT ?!

YO, URD, I'M LEAVIN' ON A QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN BUSH WARBLER.

THE MAN I LOVED SO LONG AGO WAS THE SPIRIT OF A PLUM TREE.

BUT... BUT... WHAT ABOUT *US?!*

SORRY, BABE... BUT A PLUM SPIRIT'S GOTTA DO WHAT A PLUM SPIRIT'S GOTTA DO...IN THIS CASE... QUEST FOR THE *GOLDEN BUSH WARBLER.*

THE LOVE SEEDS HAD *NOW BEEN ACTIVA-TED...*

I REALLY LIKED HIM... EVEN IF HE WAS A LITTLE WEIRD...

FARE-WELL!

AIEE

HE ALWAYS FORGETS HE CAN'T FLY...

Gasp!

...BY THE *WORD* OR *IMAGE* OF... THE *PLUM.*

TH-THAT OLD COOT OVER THERE...

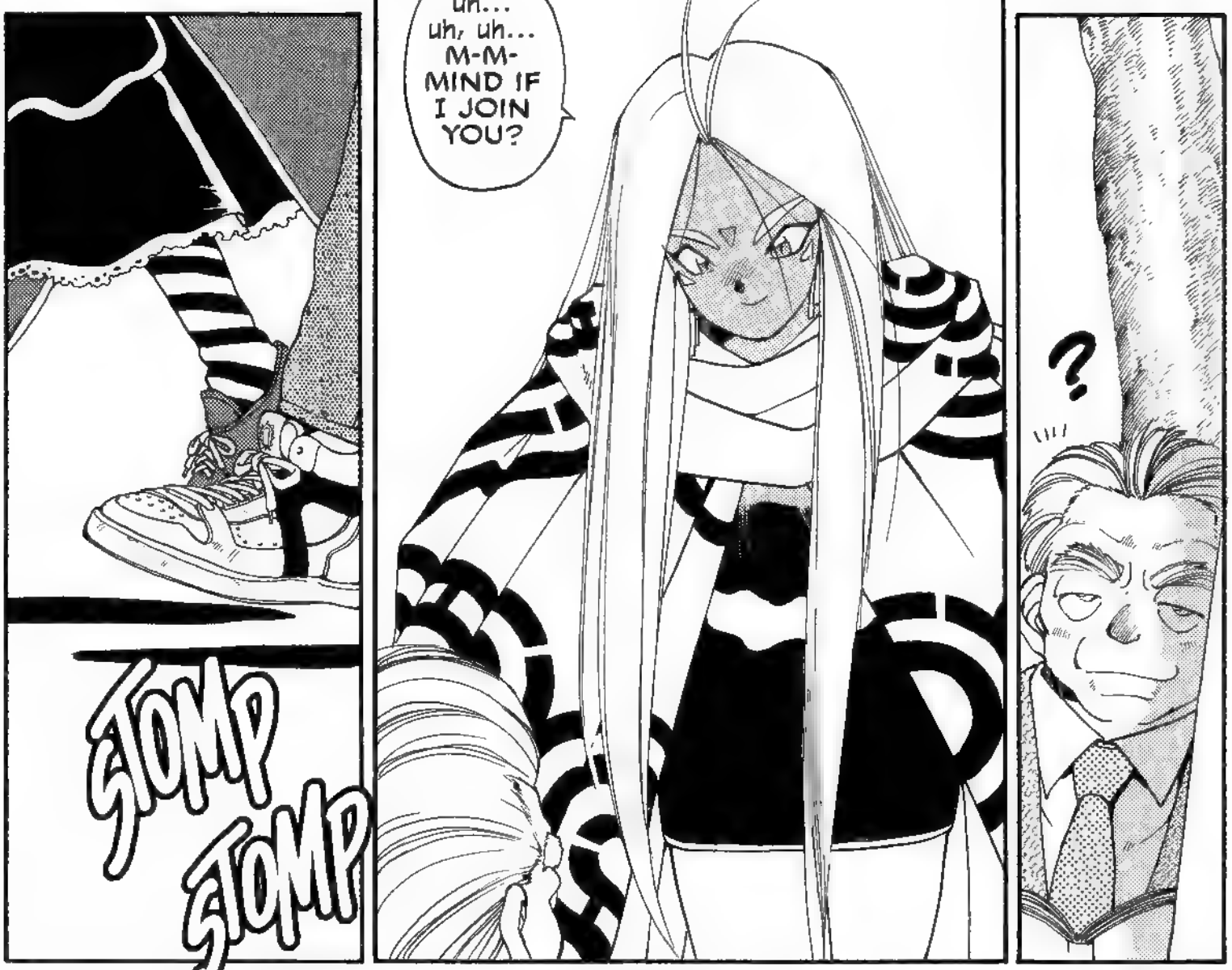
READING HIS BOOK SO... SO MANFULLY!

...HE LOOKS SO COOL!

pitta-PAT!

pitta-PAT!

pitta-PAT!


STOMP STOMP
uh... uh, uh... M-M- MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
?

LOOK, OTAKI, I'M KINDA BUSY RIGHT NOW--
GOT SOMETHIN' FOR YA, MORI- SATO...
AY!
...URD ?!
HEY, WAIT...

ONLY 2500 YEN EACH IF YOU BUY *NOW*...

WE GOT 'EM IN S, M, AND XXXL!

NOTE IT BEARS THE *PLUM* KANJI... SYMBOLIC OF...OF THE *PLUM!!*

NOT TOO BUSY FOR *THIS!* OUR FIRST BATCH OF *MOTOR CLUB SWEAT-SHIRTS!*

SALES TAX *NOT* INCLUDED...

HERE'S 5000 FOR TWO-- *OUTTA MY WAY!*

WAP

WH... WHAT...

AND *YOU* CAN PAY THE TAX!!

snif! I'M *PROUD* OF YOU, KID! IT'S A SIGN OF *MATURITY!*

...MAN... TO THINK OF THE *VIOLENT MEASURES* WE *USUALLY* NEED TO GET MONEY OUT OF HIM!

MY DEAR PROFES-SOR...

...BUT JUST FOR THIS DAY... LET US PRETEND...

I KNOW... THAT RING BINDS YOU TO ANOTHER...

...WITH THE WISDOM IN YOUR EYES.

...I FIND I'VE FALLEN IN LOVE...

URD!

S-SORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR!

SNATCH

LET ME *GO!*

...FOR ABOUT TEN SECONDS.

...THAT MADE ME FEEL YOUNG AGAIN...

BUT, STILL...

chik

KIDS NOWDAYS... THEY'VE GOT A PRETTY STRANGE SENSE OF HUMOR.

MY HEART IS *BRREEEAAAK-INNNG!!!*

I *LOVE* HIM!

I *LOVE* HIM!!!

OW! HE'S GOT A WIFE! *GRAND-KIDS!*

STRANGE... EVEN IF ***URD*** *DID DRINK THAT LOVE POTION, SHE SHOULD STILL HAVE* ***SOME*** *JUDGMENT LEFT!*

I REALLY WISH I COULD HELP HER, BUT...

BAR-RIER UP!

TRIFLE WITH MY AFFECTIONS, WILL YOU?!

WOOSH

WHEW... JUST IN TIME!

koff koff

DAMN! WE LOST HER AGAIN!

WHEN SHE GOES OFF LIKE THAT, THERE'S NO TELLING *WHAT* WILL HAPPEN!

EH?

DON'T WORRY, KEIICHI. I PLANTED A TRANSMITTER ON HER. WE'LL FIND HER IN NO TIME!

beeeep beeeep

HMPH!! DON'T THEY CARE FOR A YOUNG MAIDEN'S *FEEL-INGS?!*

ka-ziiingg!

P-P-P...

PLUM BLOSSOM COURI-ERS!!

♫ Ding-Dong

♫ Dingg-Dongg

PLEASE, MR. POSTMAN!

yes? hello?

WELL, UH...

...EXCUSE ME, WHO ARE YOU?

CAN YOU FIND... SOMEWHERE IN YOUR PACKAGES AND PARCELS...

HOW I'VE WAITED BY THE MAILBOX... FOR A HEART WITH POSTAGE DUE...

...A LETTER HOLDING LOVE FOR ME...?

WHA--?!

...AND SO...GIVE ME YOUR *SPECIAL DELIVERY... NOW.*

HMMM... MAYBE *THIS* GUY WILL BE SAFE FOR HER...

URD! YOU'RE A *SHAME-LESS* HUSSY!

--That Our Two Voices May Inter-twine!

Make My Voice Thine, and Thy Voice Mine--

Now Let Me Speak Through Thee...

I--

I...I...

...?!

"AN *AI-AI* WOULD MAKE A LOVELY PET... DON'T YOU THINK?"

NOT TOO BAD, DO YOU THINK, KEIICHI?

THE AI-AI IS A TINY PRIMATE (BODY: 15 INCHES; TAIL: 23 INCHES) INDIGENOUS TO THE ISLAND OF MADAGASCAR.

IT USES ITS LONG FINGERS TO EAT FRUIT AND CATCH INSECTS.

BELL-DANDY'S DOING THIS TO ME!

"AI-AI" ...? I... I...

...AW ...WHY ASK *WHY...?*

oops

UM...

!

?

BUT I WON'T LET MERE WORDS COME BETWEEN US, MY DARLING!

!!

...IN AN EXISTENTIALIST SENSE, ONE *PLUM*BS THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR, OR AS SARTRE PUTS IT...

...OOOH... A *PHILOS-OPHY MAJOR...*

...SO SEXY WITH HIS CLOVE CIGA-RETTES !!!

GO... WHERE'S MY LETTER?

MAN... SHE SURE IS *FICKLE!*

L'AMOUR, C'EST ABSURD!

OUTTA MY WAY! I'VE GOT A DATE WITH THE *PROFOUND!!*

HEY YOU! WITH THE GLASSES !!

HUH?

whooosh

SORRY, HONEY... I *PLUMB* FORGOT ABOUT IT.

DADDY, WE WAS S'POSED TO GO T' THE ZOO!

DADDY! WHEN KIN WE GO?!

HOW SWEET... A MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILD... THAT'S WHAT I WANT...

I WANT A REAL *FAMILY MAN!!*

THAT'S WHAT I WANT! NOW!

ALTHOUGH I DON'T SUPPOSE THINGS COULD GET ANY *WORSE*, WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER!

I'LL GO THAT WAY!

pop!

I D-DON'T KNOW HER...

AND JUST WHO MIGHT *THIS* BE, DEAR ?!

OH, NO-- THE *TRANSMITTER* FELL OFF!!

um...

I SHOULDN'T HAVE PUT ON THIS STUPID THING...

...I'M SWEAT-ING SO MUCH...

haa

haa

20

URD! WHERE'D SHE GO--?

NOT AS MUCH AS *I* AM.

PLUM.

...URD...

WH...

PLUM !!

..KEIICHI, MY DARLING.

OHH I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU...

..ALWAYS.

ulp

I-I WAS ?

YOU WERE *REALLY* WORRIED ABOUT ME, WEREN'T YOU ?

UNH !?!

FZZK

URD !!

OOOG...

E- EVEN IF YOU *ARE* MY BIG SISTER...

...I-I JUST CAN'T LET YOU...

huh?

...I- TAKE MY KEIICHI.

HE'S...

HE'S MY...

DON'T BE SILLY.

I WAS JUST KID-DING.

MY...

pat

...IF SHE REALLY *WAS* JUST KIDDING...

ANTIDOTE AMULET: Cancels the effect of love seeds.

I WON-DER...

what was...

C'MON-- LET'S GO HOME!

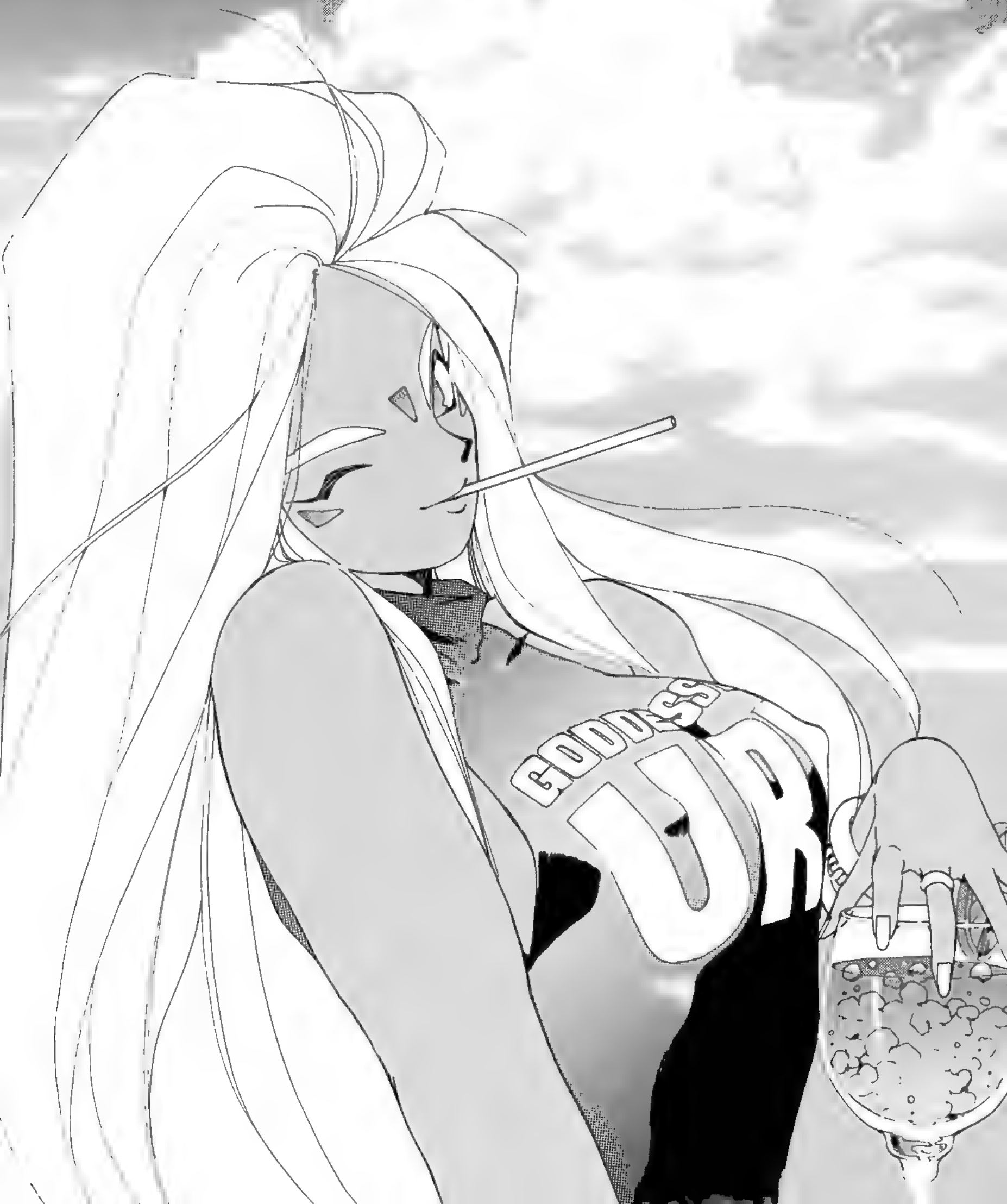
BACK! *BACK!*

BUT MEAN-WHILE, THE EFFECT HAD *FINALLY* KICKED IN FOR *TAMIYA*...

OTAKI... I KNOW *YER* A MAN...AN' *I'M* A MAN...

CHAPTER 26

The Nemesis



groan

HEY! WHAT THE--?!

!?

...transform your body...

now I shall...

...INTO ONE AS HIDEOUS AS MY OWN!!

haa
haa
haa
...THAT WAS *SOME* NIGHT-MARE.
WHOA...
I FEEL A DISTURB-ANCE ON THE NET...
RMMBBL
EEEYAAAAA

...WE COULD *ALL* BE IN *GREAT DANGER!*

...AND IF IT *IS* WHO I *FEAR...*

IN THE BACK ON THE RIGHT.

'SCUSE ME... D'YUH HAVE DA SINGLE "WHAT A MAN'S GOTTA DO"...?

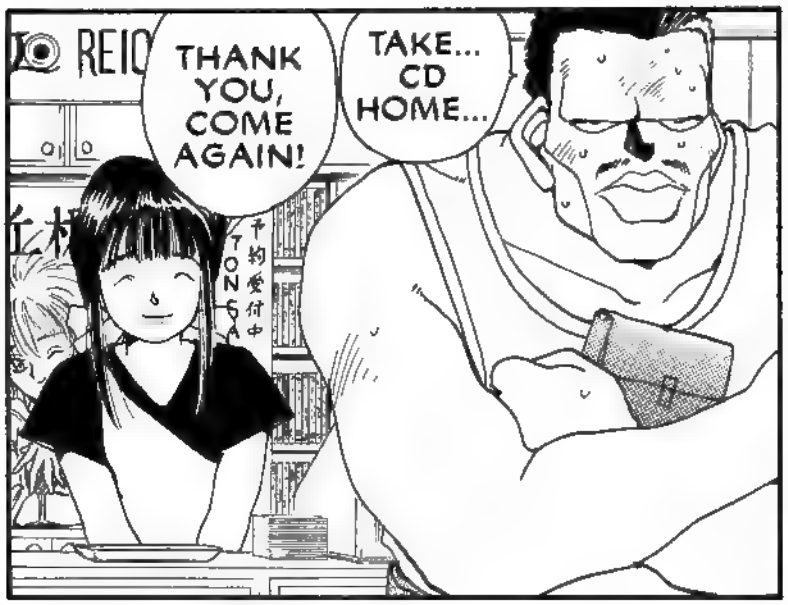
UH?

WHUT DA *HECK?*

DEMONS CD

2枚組
¥4,800

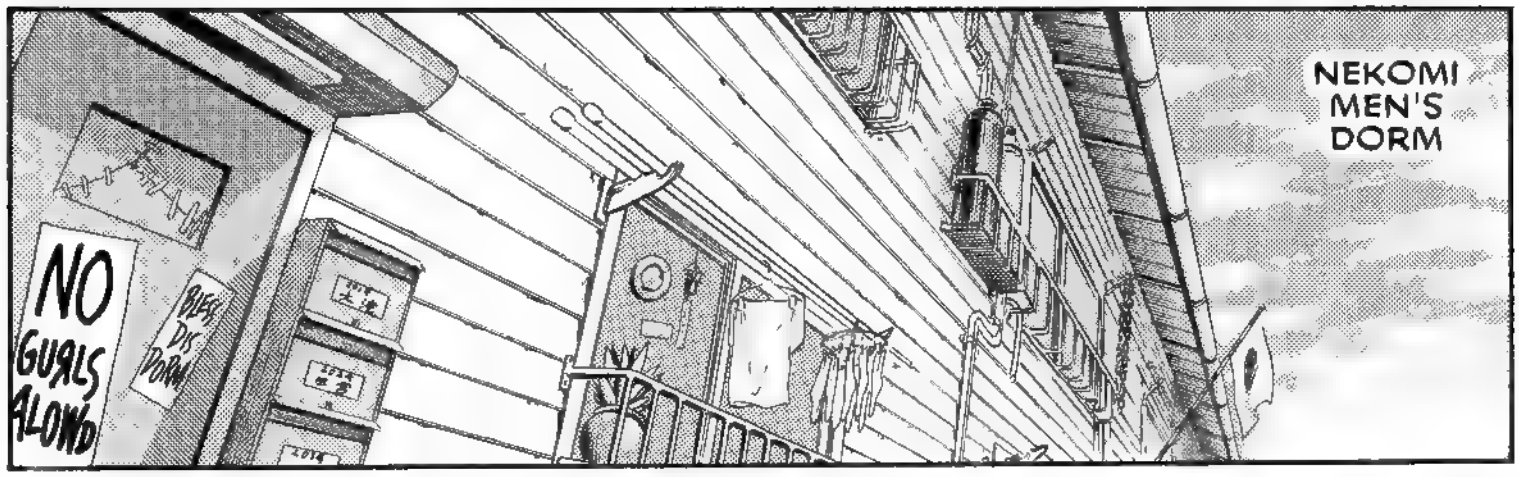
黄金帝国

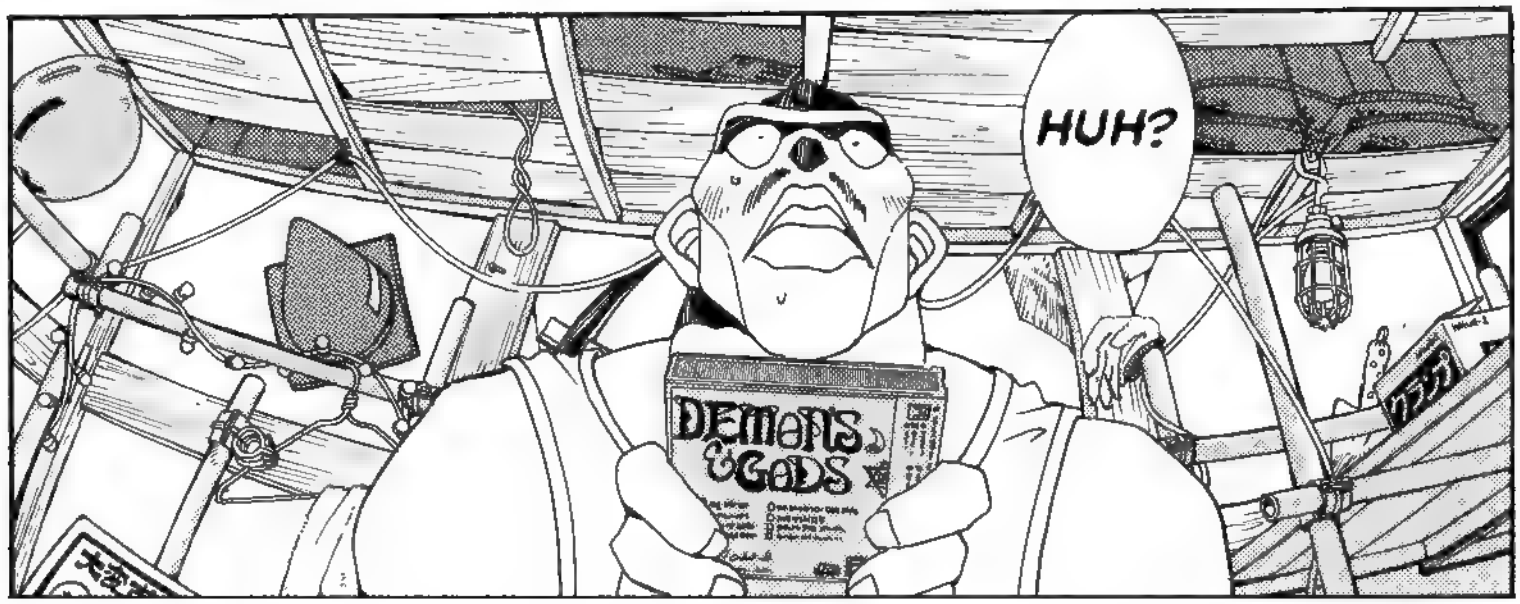

REIO
THANK YOU, COME AGAIN!
TAKE... CD HOME...

WEIRD... I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER GETTING THAT CD IN...

THAT'LL BE ¥4,800.
8月 7日
8月 14日
8月 29日
MUSIC from エクスカイザーII

A S-STRANGE F-FORCE ...! FROM DA CD...!
IT AIN'T ALL THAT POWER-FUL... BUT IT'S ENUFF TA CONTROL MY BRAIN!


NEKOMI MEN'S DORM
NO GUYS ALOWD
BLESS DIS DORM


HUH?
DEMONS & GODS

I DON'T REMEMBER BUYIN' IT!

WHUT'S *DIS?!*

BUT *HEY!*

I'LL PUT IT ON DA OL' *TURN-TABLE!* YA *NEVER* KNOW!

I DON'T REMEMBER HAVIN' A CD PLAYER, EITHER!

HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?!

FUSD

...INTO *COLLEGE*, I MEAN. TRYING TO PLAY A CD ON A RECORD PLAYER...WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF *LOW-BROWED MORON...?*

oof

I MEAN *HERE...*

AND SINCE YOU *SUMMONED* ME...

THE NAME'S ***MARA***. I'M A ***DEMON*** FIRST-CLASS, UNLIMITED.

...I'LL RETURN THE FAVOR... AND GRANT YOU EXACTLY ***ONE*** WISH!

STERO

HEY!

WHAP

WOOSH

!!

D-DAT WAS SO SCARY, MUH EYES EMERGED FROM DERE *PROTECTIVE BONE RIDGES!!!*

VERY WELL... YOUR WISH IS GRANTED.

NOT A VERY INSPIRED CHOICE, I MUST SAY.

I WANTCHA T' GET OUT *RITE NOW !!!*

HOWJUH GET *IN* HERE?!

THAK!

THOK!

BAR-RIER UP!!

BARRIER

KEIICHI, YOU *MUSTN'T* STEP OUT OF THIS HOUSE TILL I RETURN, OKAY?

...TO LET THESE GODDESSES DO AS THEY *PLEASE!*

HEH HEH HEH! FAR BE IT FROM *MARA*, TOP AGENT OF THE *DEMON REALM*...

THOSE WAVES MUST BELONG TO MARA... I'M SURE OF IT.

MARA MAY EVEN BE HERE ALREADY...

I CAN'T TRACK THE DISTURBANCE FROM INSIDE THE BARRIER, SO I'VE GOT TO GO OUT.

...SOUNDS LIKE SHE *KNOWS* THIS GUY.

"MARA," HUH...

SORRY FOR THE LANGUAGE, BUT I *AM* A DEMON.

!!

DAMN *RIGHT* SHE DOES!

BETTER THAN *YOU'LL* EVER KNOW HER, SONNY BOY!

I'M HERE TO GIVE YOU YOUR NEW BODY.

FOOL. DON'T YOU *RECOGNIZE* MY VOICE... THE VOICE IN YOUR *NIGHT-MARE...?*

KSHHH

HEY, I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THIS SORT OF CRAP FROM SOME *STUPID FROG!!*

FROG?

...MY DEAR BELL-DANDY.

HEH HEH HEH... BUT YOU WERE A BIT *CARELESS* WHEN YOU BUILT IT...

MA RA!!

AEEEE

KEIICHI ?!

N-N-NIGHT-MARE?! N-N-*NEW* BODY?!

THE BARRIER COULDN'T HAVE BEEN THAT EASY TO BREAK THROUGH!

BUT HOW ?!

...HAD I NOT *ALREADY BEEN INSIDE* BEFORE YOU ENERGIZED IT.

THE BARRIER *WOULD* HAVE BEEN TOO STRONG, IT'S TRUE...

OH... AND AS FOR *KEIICHI*...

NOT THE *FROG*. THE *NEWT* !!

OH, KEIICHI, I'M *SO* SORRY! THIS IS ALL *MY* FAULT!

oops

NO!!

KEIICHI!!

HAVE FUN SNUGGLING UP WITH YOUR *DARLING*, DEAR!

NOW, YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT.

I'M A ***DEMON*** FIRST-CLASS. I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU.

AS A GODDESS FIRST-CLASS, I ***COMMAND*** YOU!

GIVE HIM BACK HIS REAL FORM ***NOW***, MARA!!

HI, GUYS!

?

Be As You Were, in Form and Function!

POOF

NOT THE FROG. THE NEWT!

ALTHOUGH I GUESS HE'S A LIZARD NOW...

I HAVE TO ADMIT THIS IS PRETTY CRUEL...EVEN BY *MARA'S* STANDARDS!!

WHAT?! MARA'S HERE?!

UM...

HEY, WHAT'S UP?

OH, KEIICHI! EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE ROUGH AND SCALY, I WON'T ABANDON YOU!

♡

...HMPH ...A CHILD-HOOD FRIEND...

...WHO DOES THAT JERK THINK HE IS, ANY-WAY?!

MARA ALWAYS *WAS* NASTY, EVEN AS A KID...

SO I WAS TRYING TO BREAK THE ENCRYPTION ONE STEP AT A TIME...

...BUT I'M NOT GETTING VERY FAR.

I KNOW, I KNOWWW!

shake-a shake-a

BUT TO BREAK A DEMON'S CURSE, YOU NEED TO HAVE THE *PASSWORD*, DON'T YOU?

roof

RIGHT! GETTING CLOSER!

AND NOW!

Poof

OKAY!

Poof

HERE, SIS, LET *URD* FINISH THE JOB!

HEY, *HEY!!*

poof

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GET *MARA* TO BREAK THE SPELL.

...BUT HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET SOMEONE LIKE MARA TO DO *THAT...?*

ER... SORRY.

NEVER MIND. YOU'RE RIGHT...WE WON'T GET ANYWHERE WITHOUT THE PASSWORD ANYWAY.

THE *CATALYST* !!

THAT'S RIGHT-- AND THEY ALWAYS COME IN PAIRS.

WHENEVER A DEMON APPEARS, THERE'S ALWAYS A *CATALYST!*

...Show Us Where the Catalyst of Mara Be!

Eyes of Heaven, Eyes of Earth, Eyes of Sea...

OH!

WELL ...?

IT'S CLOSE... AND IT'S GETTING *CLOSER!*

DEMON'S CD

THAT'S *IT!!*

huh?

SKKRUNK

YOU GOTS A *CD* PLAYER?

YO, MORI-SATO!

GUESS I'D BETTER LOOK FOR A PLACE TO STAY...

tap

....

...AH ...*BELL-DANDY.*

GIVE KEIICHI BACK HIS NATURAL FORM THIS *INSTANT!!*

MARA!

I MEAN, *NO.*

...OH ...OKAY.

!!

NO!

SEKI

ONE FOR *DEMONS*... ONE FOR *GODS!!*

THAT'S *RIGHT*, MARA! IT'S A *DOUBLE DISC SET!*

THE *CD* OF THE *GODS...!!*

AND IT'S *CERTAINLY* POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BIND YOU!!

NO! WAIT !!
WHY ?!

YOU CAN BREAK YOUR CONTRACT WITH HIM ANYTIME YOU *WANT!!*
WHY IS A *GODDESS* LIKE YOU PLAYING SERVANT TO A MERE *HUMAN?!*

I'M ALSO HERE OF MY OWN *FREE WILL!!*
I'M NOT *HERE* JUST BECAUSE OF A *CONTRACT!*

HRRGH!

OKAY!!
I'LL TELL
YOU THE
PASS-
WORD!!

OKAY!

gasp!

kyaa!

...WHICH
DIDN'T
RETURN
KEIICHI'S
CLOTHES...

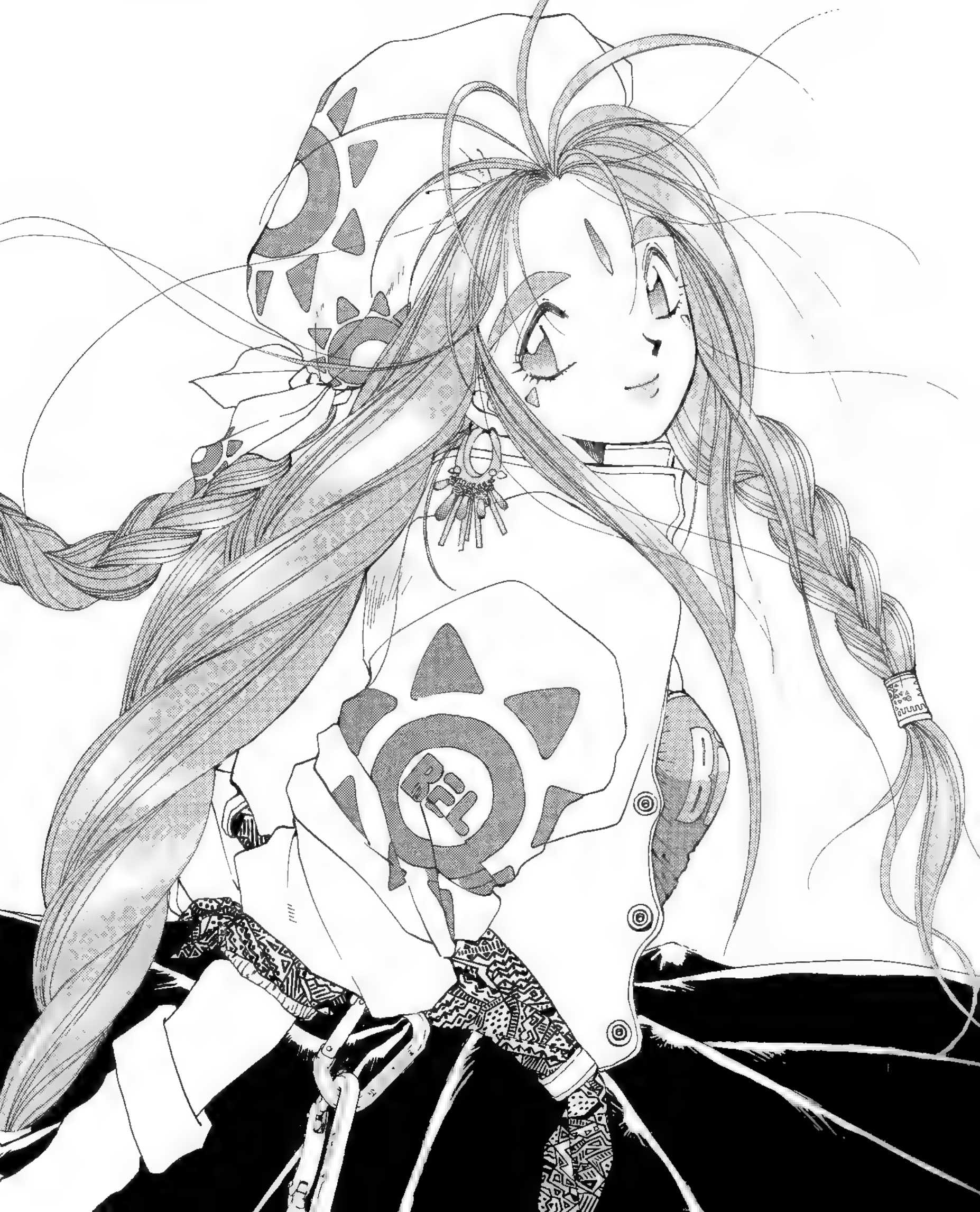
HEY,
BUDDY...
WANT SOME
O' THIS
BURGER I
FOUND?

DAMN...
NOW I
REALLY
GOTTA FIND
A PLACE.

...NOR
GET RID
OF THE
PERSON
WHO
HAD
CAUSED
ALL THE
TROUBLE.

CHAPTER 27

Mara's Counterattack



BEEP-
BEEP!

8:00
WEATHER CODE

BEEP-
BEEP!

hm?

BEEP-
BEEP
BEEP!

WHO
THE
HELL IS
THAT?!

NNNN

WHAT HAPPENED LAST...

huh?

beep beep

NOW, JUST CALM DOWN, SAYOKO.

I CAN'T REMEMBER! FROM THE TIME I LEFT SCHOOL YESTERDAY, MY MIND'S A COMPLETE BLANK!!

huh ?!

...AND THEN... AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

I GOT IN MY CAR...

...AND THEN...

LET'S SEE... AFTER MY LAST CLASS...

fwip fwap

THAT'S CRAZY! EVEN IF I DID GET TOTALLY SLOSHED, I SHOULD AT LEAST REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE I STARTED DRINKING!!

NOW, IF I CAN ONLY FIND...

THAT'S *RIGHT!* I BOUGHT A *CD* YESTER-DAY!

blink!

hmmmm...

snff

huh?

青炒老醜

武江人民公社

HERE IT *IS!!*

CD?

RRR

hahh

hahh

DID YOU SAY A CD?!

!!

DEMONS CD

uh... what?

EEEEKK!!

THE *DEMONS CD* AND *GODS CD* FORM AN *INSEPARABLE PAIR.*

THEY'RE A 2-CD SET, YOU KNOW... NOT AVAILABLE ON LP OR CASSETTE.

OH, YES.

Y-Y-YOU MEAN THAT DEMON'S *STILL AROUND?!*

BUT I CAN'T LET MARA HAVE THE *GODS CD*-- THAT'S MY TRUMP CARD.

WITHOUT *BOTH* OF THEM, MARA CAN'T LEAVE.

SO HE'S GONNA HANG AROUND HERE *FOREVER?!*

...IF ONLY THE DEMON WOULD DECIDE TO LEAVE OF ITS OWN ACCORD...

but, no.

...TO *SEAL MARA UP?*

WHAT ABOUT USING THE *GODS CD...*

yeah... right.

I TURNED YOU INTO THE FROG.

ACTUALLY, IDIOT, *MARA* TURNED YOU INTO THE NEWT.

YEAH! DO IT! DO IT!

IT SEEMS TOO CRUEL... EVEN FOR A DEMON.

IF I SEAL MARA UP, SHE'LL BE TRAPPED FOR *500 YEARS.*

NO, NO, WE JUST *CAN'T.*

why not?

THE IDIOT TURNED ME INTO A NEWT... AND A *FROG,* TOO!

LET'S SEE HOW A DEMON LIKES A TASTE OF ITS OWN MEDICINE! AND OTHER CLICHÉS!

WHO *ARE* YOU? I'VE NEVER ***SEEN*** YOU BEFORE!!

GET *OUT* OF HERE!!

HEY. WAIT. ***HEY!***

...SOONER OR LATER.

BUT MARA'S BOUND TO COME FOR THE ***CD...***

EEK! HELP!

LAY OFF! THE NAME'S--

trip!

um...

AND YOUR *EEEEEVIL* PSYCHIC EMANATIONS *CALLED ME!*

--THE NAME'S *MARA... DEMON FIRST CLASS!!*

YOU WANT TO GET RID OF BELLDANDY, DON'T YOU?

SO DON'T PLAY THE GOOD GIRL.

UH-OH!

JUST HOW POWERFUL *ARE* THOSE EMANATIONS?!

BELL-DANDY?

EEEK!!

BELL-DANDY?!

ER, YEAH...

...YOU'LL HELP *ME* GET BELLDANDY OUT OF THE PICTURE... IS THAT RIGHT?

LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT...

OKAY, YOU'RE *ON!*

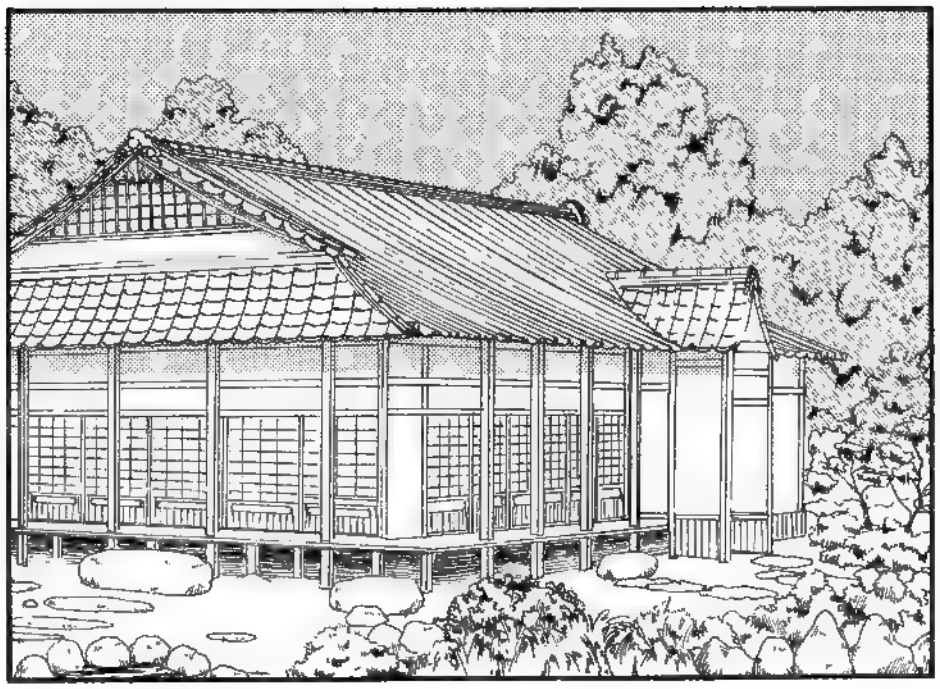
NOW... WHAT DO I OWE YOU IN RETURN? MY SOUL? SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

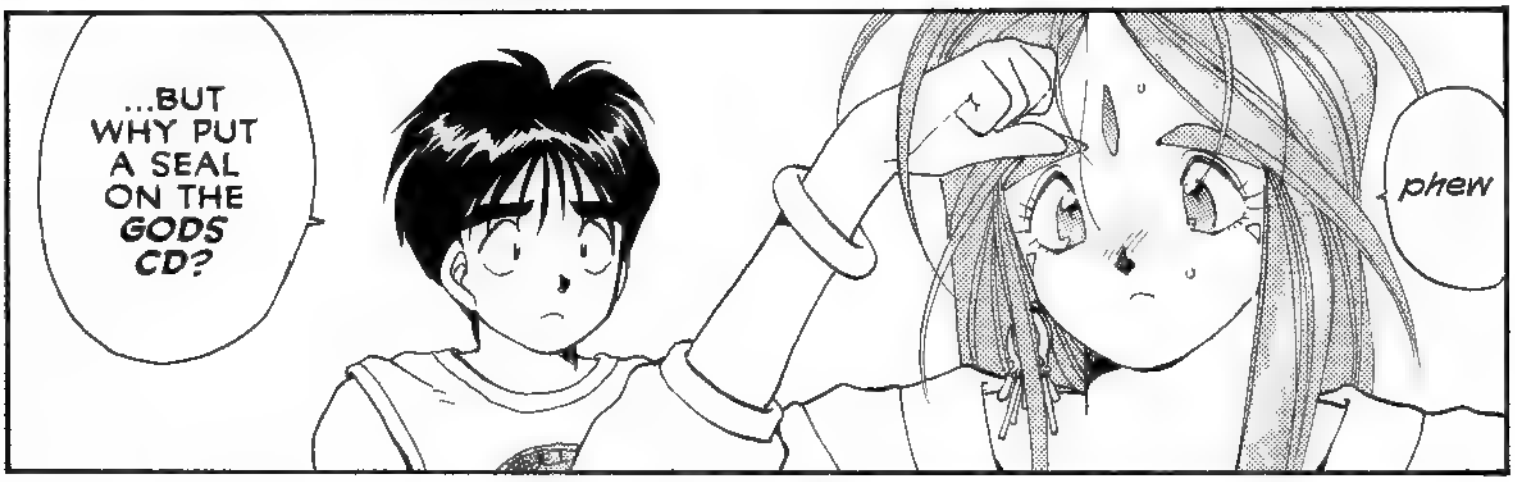
...BUT WHO CARES, AS LONG AS A DEMON'S AS GOOD AS ITS WORD?

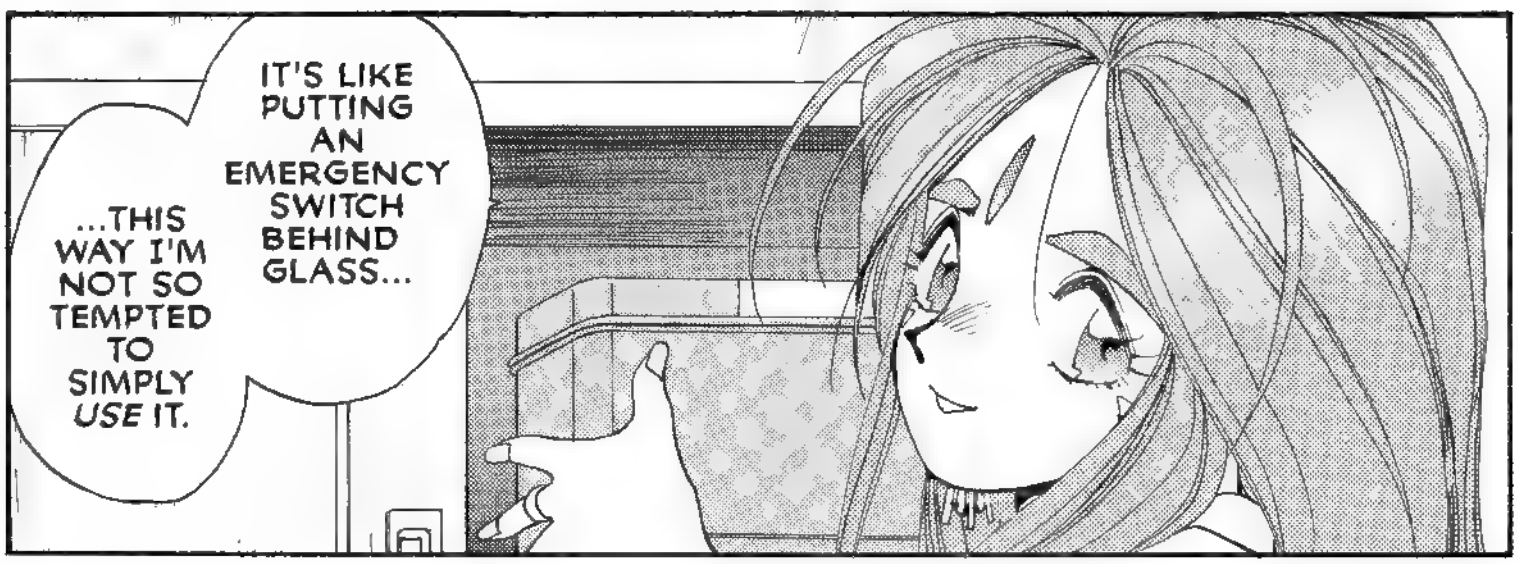
HOW'D THIS "MARA" KNOW ABOUT ME AND BELL-DANDY, ANY-WAY?

Close O Guardian Seal... Till Next You Hear My Command...

And May Any Who Touch Thee... Be Seized By the Wrath of Heaven!







JUST LEAVE EVERYTHING TO YOUR BIG SIS *URD!*

huh?

AWW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO ALL THAT *TROUBLE!*

AHH!!

URD?

BLUBBLE BLUBBLE

BLORP

!!

HERE... CHECK OUT MY *POTION...*

RIGHT, URD?

YOU'VE GOT TO THINK OF THE *ENVIRONMENT* BEFORE YOU DUMP HORRIBLE, TOXIC THINGS DOWN THE DRAIN!

UH... *YEAH!*

RIGHT... EVERY-ONE'S GOT A POINT...

I WORKED *HARD* ON THAT!

HEY!!

glub glub

THE *SINK!* QUICK!

SHAME ON YOU, KEIICHI!

tock tick

...

tock tick

tock

tick

...I'M READY.

I'VE GOT MY BASEBALL BAT...

...THE DISTURB-ANCE IS GETTING STRONGER! WE *MUST* BE VIGILANT!

MARA'S COM-ING...

ZZZZZZ

Ding-Dong!

AH!

hnf?

OKAY... THIS IS IT... *STRIKE WITHOUT MERCY!!*

.....it's sayoko.

OH, *HI...*

KILL!! *KILL!!*

WHAT'D SHE COME AROUND FOR, ANYWAY?

OH, THAT'S OKAY-- DON'T EVEN *WORRY* ABOUT IT!

psycho witch !!

I'M *SO* SORRY!

WE WERE EXPECT-ING... *uh...* ***SOME-ONE ELSE!***

Drink

IT'S RIGHT DOWN THE HALL.

DO YOU MIND IF I USE THE LITTLE DEBUTANTE'S ROOM?

THAT'S IT? THAT'S *ALL?* WHAT A ***STEAL!***

...THAT IS MY PRICE...

*...MORISATO HAS THE **GODS CD** AT HIS HOUSE. I WANT YOU TO GO AND **FETCH** IT FOR ME...*

EEEEK!!

WHAT NOW?

I'M AFRAID IT MAY BE...

...LET'S SEE... SUPPOSED TO BE IN A SEALED BOX LABELLED ANT CRACKERS...

Shff

A-HA!!

I'M STUCK! I CAN'T MOVE!!

SO! TRYING TO SWIPE OUR ANT CRACKERS, EH? WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST ASK?

I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR STUPID ANT CRACKERS!

I Am the Master of this Seal... Hear My Command...

er...

I SEE... SHE'S BEEN "SEIZED" BY THE WRATH OF HEAVEN, VERY GOOD.

HAR-DEE HAR HAR *HAR!* THANKS FOR THE *CD*, CHUMPS!!

Demons & Gods

THAT WAS SCARY. WHAT IS THIS...

?

?

NOW!

fssshh

...OPEN !!

shpp

klank

NOW I'M FREE! FREE!

hee-hee-hee!

thmp

HAAAAHAHAHAHAHAHA

ha?!

YANK!

TH-THE *GODS* *CD?!* B-BUT--

--HOW DID YOU--?!

KIDOOSH!

S- SOME-THING'S *PULLING* *ME* *DOWN* *...?!*

KRRRR

IF *THAT'S* THE *GODS CD,* THEN WHAT'S IN *HERE...?*

KSSSSHHH

FWAM!

...

Golden Reggae Hits

WARNINGS ON THE USE OF THIS CD:

*WELL...*IT SEEMED A SHAME TO JUST SEAL IT UP LIKE THAT, SO I PUT IN A SUBSTI-TUTE...

LOOK, MARA, PLEASE...

...WON'T YOU JUST GO *HOME* NOW?

CRAK

HAH! DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH, DEAR! AFTER ALL--

--I'VE GOT THE OTHER ONE!!

!!

SKSSHHH

KEIICHI LOOKS SO *FUNNY* WHEN HE WHIRLS AROUND!

IT'S A TWISTER! *IT'S A TWISTER!*

MARA, IF WE KEEP THIS UP, EVERYONE WILL GET CAUGHT IN THE VORTEX!!

GBLORP

BLUBB BLUBB

....

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT ?!

HMM...

EVEN IF I'M SEALED IN...THE INTERACTION WITH THE GODS CD MAY LET ME BREAK FREE...

shff

WAIT! BELL-DANDY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I NEVER EXPECTED THINGS TO GO *THIS* FAR--

--BUT THAT'S JUST TOO BAD. I HAVE MY OWN JOB TO DO.

WAIT!! STOP!!

BLORP BLORP

H-*HEY!* WHAT'S THAT HORRIBLE, TOXIC *THING* DOWN THERE?!

HANG

GLURGGLE

gulp

DON'T CALL IT AN "IT"... I *MADE*... *er, IT!*

IT... *IT...*

I THINK YOU'RE GONNA HAFTA WAIT TILL IT TAKES A CRAP.

brr rrrpppp

C'MON, GIVE IT BACK! ***PLEEEASE !!***

NOW, KEIICHI... DO YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DUMP THINGS DOWN THE DRAIN?

OKAY... NOW I'VE *TOTALLY* LOST THE POINT.

!!

GBLOOP

shlipp

shloopp

CHAPTER 28

Balance-Ball Amour

AW, IT'S TOO *NICE* A DAY TO STAY INSIDE, KEIICHI! C'MON! YOU TWO GO OUT AND HAVE SOME ***FUN!***

HEY! GIVE IT ***BACK!!***

THAT HOME-WORK'S DUE *TOMORROW!*

IF YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME INDOORS, YOU'LL TURN (or around here, maybe ***be turned***) INTO A ***MUSHROOM,*** KIDDO!

DON'T TRY ANY ***TRICKS!***

Poof

Poof

poof

STOP IT RIGHT NOW!!

RIGHT NOW!! RIGHT NOW!!
RIGHT NOW!!

NOW, URD-- KEIICHI COULDN'T GET *ANY* OF HIS SCHOOLWORK DONE DURING THAT TROUBLE WITH MARA!!

NEVER MIND! KEIICHI, MAYBE WE *SHOULD* GO OUT!

OH... WAIT... COULD YOU HEAR THAT?

...WHILE YOU STILL *CAN!*

THAT'S RIGHT, GO OUT AND HAVE *FUN...*

thap

HEH HEH *HEH....*

VRMMBB

WHAT ABOUT YOUR PROMISE TO GET RID OF BELL-DANDY?

HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO SIT AROUND ON YOUR BUTT WATCHING TV, ANY-WAY?

STOP NAGGING ME, O JEALOUS ONE... IT'S ALL IN THE BALANCE.

THEREFORE A LITTLE *PUSH*...AND KEIICHI'S HEART SHALL BECOME ***YOURS***.

AND WHEN SOMEONE'S HEART IS IN THE BALANCE, IT CAN BE TIPPED EITHER WAY.

INDEED! BUT *THIS* ONE MEASURES THE BALANCE OF KEIICHI'S ***HEART***.

WHAT'S *THAT?*

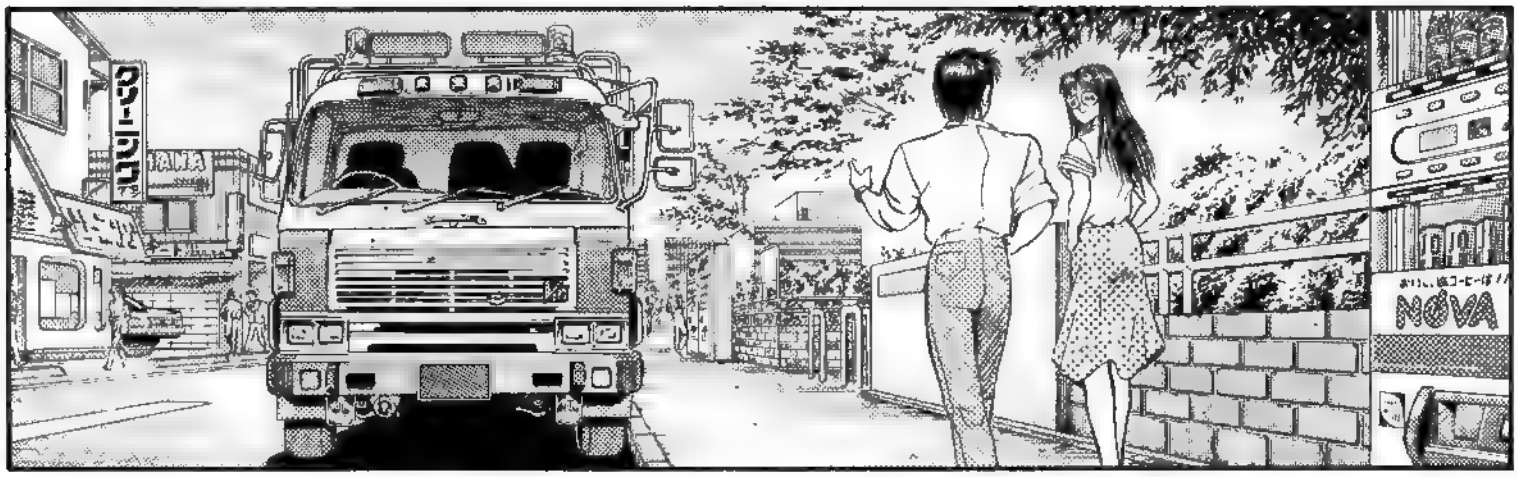
LOOKS LIKE A CRYSTAL BALL...

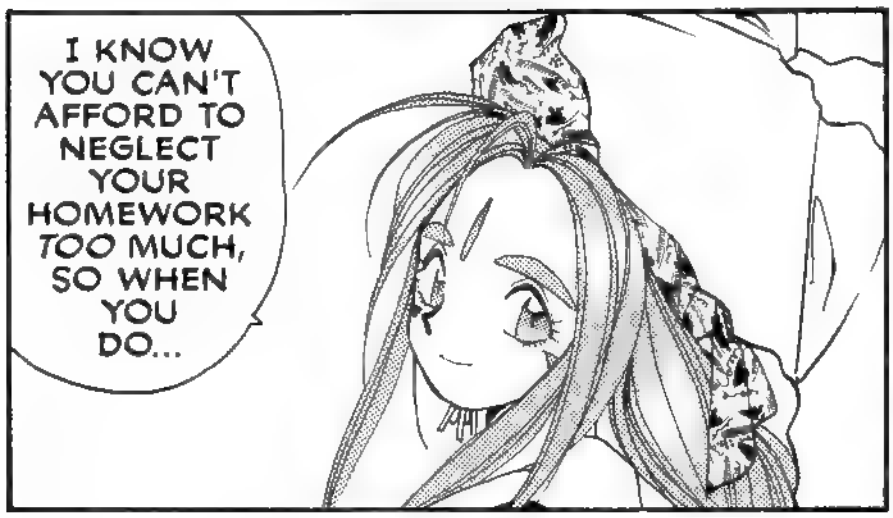
KEIICHI'S JUST A MEANS TO THAT END.

MY GOAL IS TO GET RID OF ***BELL-DANDY***... THAT'S ALL.

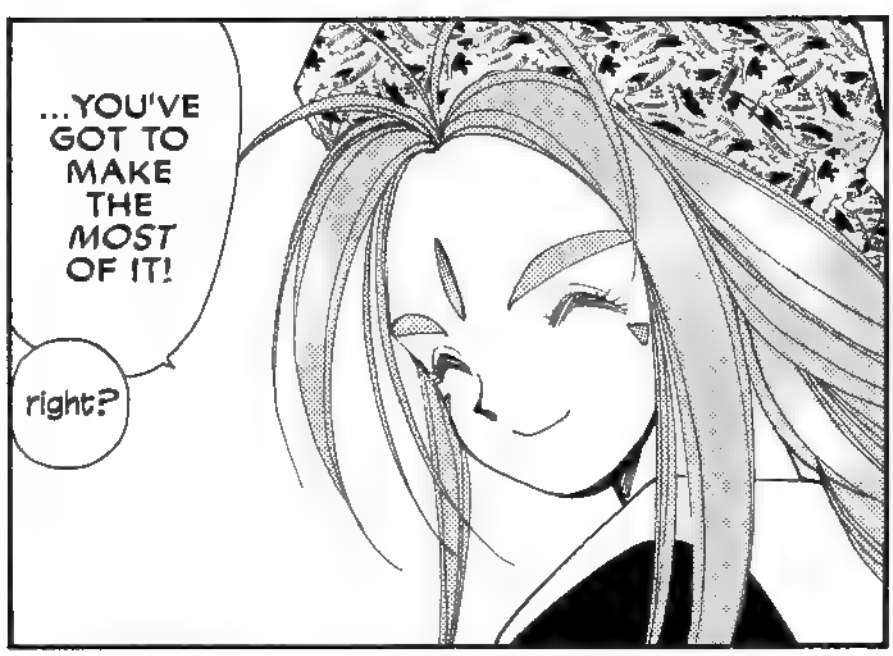
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME.

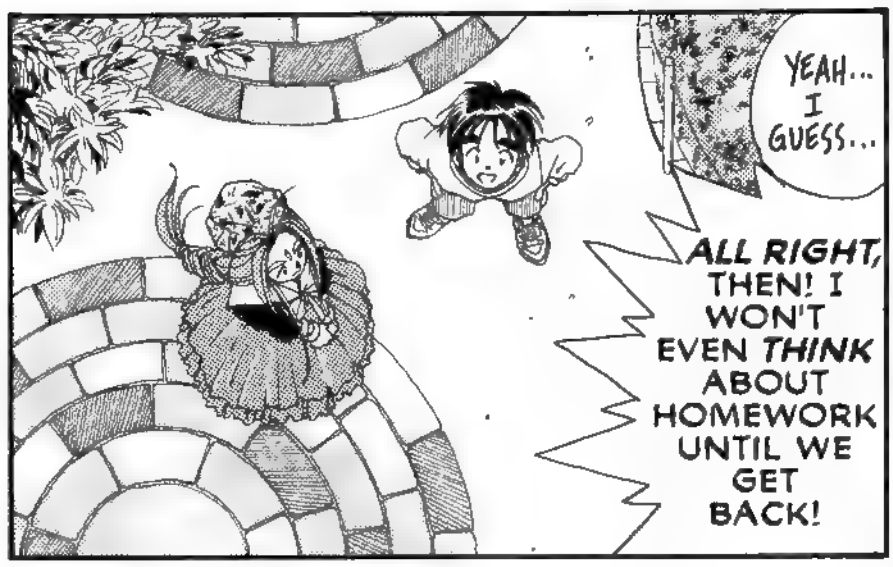
INDEED HE IS, MY DEAR.


NOVA


I KNOW YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO NEGLECT YOUR HOMEWORK *TOO* MUCH, SO WHEN YOU DO...

AREN'T YOU GLAD WE WENT OUT?
JUST SMELL THAT FRESH AIR!!


...YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE THE *MOST* OF IT!
right?


YEAH... I GUESS...
ALL RIGHT, THEN! I WON'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT HOMEWORK UNTIL WE GET BACK!

...YES! HA! DRINK YOUR "SODA," MORTAL!

SAY, YOU WANT A SODA?

WHOOSH

HEH HEH...

FOR SOON YOU WILL DRINK NAUGHT BUT...um... SOMETHING EVIL, THAT ISN'T SODA!

WHOOSH

MARA'S WAVES ...!

!!

KEIICHI'S IN TROUBLE!

IT WAS ONLY FOR AN INSTANT... BUT THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THEM!

HUH?

klik

Big Big Awake...

A... Loser's Life to TAKE!

rrrmmm

MUST BE OUT OF ORDER...

HEY, WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH THIS STUPID MACHINE ?!

IT WON'T GIVE ME MY *MONEY* BACK, EITHER!

!!

KEIICHI !!

YES! *SAVE* HIM, BELL-DANDY!

FORGIVE ME, KEIICHI... I MUST KNOCK YOU CLEAR WITH*...

VVmmmm

*A SPHERE OF PURE ENERGY!

ZAPP

URNGH

!!

...WHY AM I STILL *ALIVE?*

hey...

OW...

OW

AND HOW CAN I *STAY* THAT WAY?!

Posts and Lanterns Rise from Street... Plant Thyself As a Gate of Steel!

TO NOOG

TO NOOG

WHIPP

ALL *RIGHT*, MARA!! I *KNOW* YOU'RE THERE!!

wobble

AND I WON'T TOLERATE ANY MORE OF... OF YOUR...

BELL!

...AWFUL... behav...

...IT DIDN'T TAKE *LONG*, DID IT?

HMMM... IT SEEMS YOU USED UP ALL YOUR *STRENGTH*...

MY *ANKLE!*

SPLORSH

YOU WERE LOOKING AFTER ME!

I'M SORRY... IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT!

PARKING TICKET

DAMN YOU, MARA !!

MAYBE HE'S JUST ONE OF THOSE SUCKERS WHO WAS BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN.

HEY! I ONLY DID THE *TRUCK* STUFF!

!!

WOOSH

YOU SEE...

AH, BUT I *DO* HAVE THE RIGHT.

IT'S ONLY BECAUSE *YOU'RE* CAUSING ALL THE TROUBLE!

SHUT UP, YOU!

ESPECIALLY THAT *PARKING TICKET*... THAT WAS EVIL!

...IT CERTAINLY *IS* YOUR FAULT, KEIICHI.

YES...

BELL-DANDY'S MY *FIANCÉE...*

FIANCÉE?!

SOON YOU SHALL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DO MY ***BIDDING!***

YOUR HEART SHALL TILT! ...YOU SHALL BE IN MY POWER!

FEMI-NINE.

NO. NOT "FIANCÉ" "FIANCÉE."

n-no...

YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW...

WHAT *HAP-PENED*, KEIICHI?

...SHE USED UP ALL HER POWERS *AGAIN* ?!

16 17 18 19 20
23 24 25 26 27
30 31

BACK SO SOON?

NOT *ONLY* ARE PEOPLE SICK, BUT...

guilt

remorse

NO...

YOU DIDN'T TAKE *ADVANTAGE* OF HER, DID YOU?

...OKAY, KEIICHI! THIS POTION SHOULD FIX HER UP...

FWOOSH

YO! KEIICHI ...?

WHERE'D HE GO...?

!!

Poof

Poof

Poof

LISTEN TO *THIS* FIRST.

AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LOSE TO A MERE DEMON LIKE *YOU!*

fsssh

HO HO HO! I WASN'T BORN *YESTERDAY*, MARA!!

Poof

Poof

THE... THE HEAD-PHONES ...!

tmp

WHOOSH

!!

klik

THAT... THAT SOUND ...!!!

HE'S ABOUT TO TIP TO ONE SIDE.

fzzzzmm

IT'LL BE ANY TIME NOW.

NYA HA HA!

SOON! SOON!

....

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE SOME-ONE TO TALK TO.

WHAT'S UP, KEIICHI?

SAYOKO ...?

MEANWHILE...

ZZZZZZ

yawn

WHAT A PAIN...

...IT'S DEMONIC!

MARA *KNEW* THE EFFECT IT WOULD HAVE ON ME...

OF COURSE... SHE *IS* A DEMON...

I'VE GOT TO WAKE *BELL-DANDY!*

ALWAYS BORES ME TO ***SLEEP!***

ENKA MUSIC.

Come to me with your muscle-hess...

THE ***BIG*** ME WILL BE OUT FOR A WHILE!

IT'S A GOOD THING I LEFT A SPARE ***MINI-URD*** LOOSE.

SO WHY FEEL GUILTY OVER THAT, KEIICHI?!

IT SOUNDS LIKE BELLDANDY HELPS YOU OUT BY HER OWN CHOICE.

BUT, YOU KNOW...

hmm...

...I SEE.

WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT WITH ME, HUH? I'M NOT THE POSSESSIVE TYPE. YOU'LL ALWAYS BE FREE.

BUT NOW YOU FIND OUT SHE'S ENGAGED TO SOMEONE ELSE--SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF CHEESY SOAP OPERA!

EXCELLENT, MY DEAR!

UH... I **WAS** SERIOUS, Y'KNOW...

THANKS FOR TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.

YOU'RE A REAL SWEET-HEART, SAYOKO.

...THERE YOU GO, KEIICHI.... THERE YOU...

NOW, IF I FOCUS MY ENERGY... AND INCREASE HER CHARISMA JUST A BIT MORE...

urk

AND JUST WHAT ARE WE UP TO, MARA?

I MEAN... IF YOU NO LONGER WANT ME...

TH-THEN I GUESS I WON'T BE NEEDED HERE ANYMORE, KEIICHI.

really?

MAYBE I *SHOULD* SWITCH TO YOU... HUH, SAYOKO.

TH... THANKS FOR THE LOVELY TIME... KEIICHI!

...I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RETURN HOME.

YEAH, SURE. WE DON'T WANT TO GET TOO COMMITTED, RIGHT?

NO!!

NO! NO!! STOP!!!

IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED.

THAT WASN'T *ME* SAYING THAT!

DON'T *GO*, BELL-DANDY!

!!

STOP!! I DIDN'T MEAN IT!!!

...HE WAS POSSESSED THROUGH THIS ***BALANCE SPHERE,*** BY...

DOES THAT EVEN *SOUND* LIKE KEIIICHI?

C'MON, SIS.

...SHOW YOUR-SELF, MARA.

CURSES !!

THAT'S RIGHT...> HARD ROCK IS DEMONIC...?

IT'S DEMON-IC!

SHE CAST THE *HEADPHONES OF HARD ROCK* UPON ME! I'M *REVEALED!*

fwish

HE DIDN'T KNOW! HE DIDN'T KNOW!

I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT... MARA'S A *WOMAN.*

NO, MARA'S NOT MY FIANCÉE.

W-WHAT ?!

CAN'T STOP... *THE MUSIC!*

LOOK... STOP YOUR SINFUL GYRATING TO THE BEAT, OR I'M OUT OF HERE.

dance!

dance!

IS *THAT* WHAT SHE TOLD YOU?!

MARA'S *FIANCÉE ?!!*

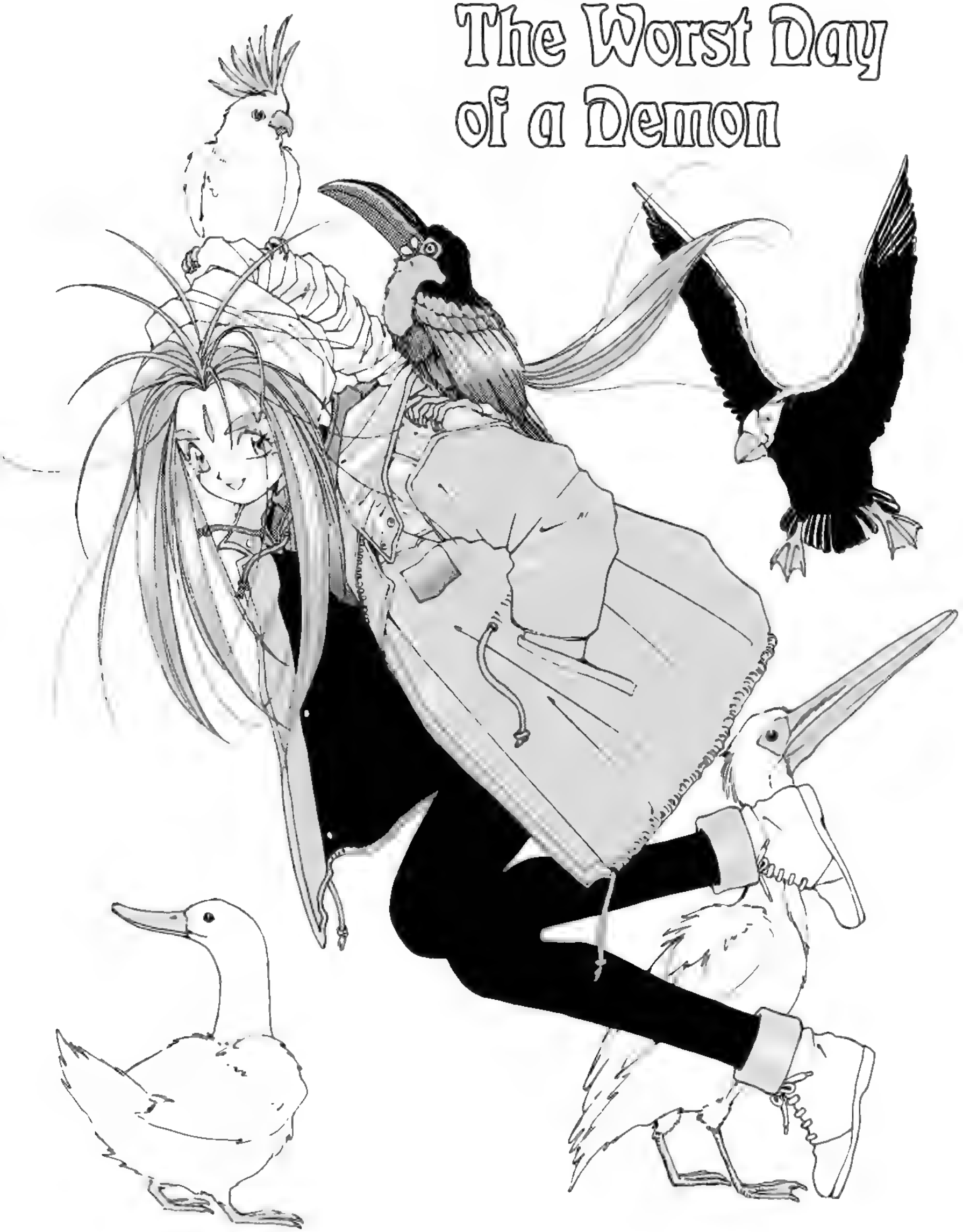
chuckle! chortle!

"she"?

BUT IF YOU'RE MARA'S FIANCÉE...

CHAPTER 29

The Worst Day of a Demon



...AIN'T BEEN SEEN IN THESE PARTS FOR QUITE A WHILE.

THE ~~DEMON~~ DEMONNESS MARA, WHO HAD SHOWN UP TO TROUBLE BELLDANDY...

ALL THAT ~~GODLESS~~ GODDESS DANCING URD MADE HER DO.'

THAT'S 'CAUSE SHE WAS PLUMB TUCKERED OUT, AND RECKONED SHE NEEDED TO REST.

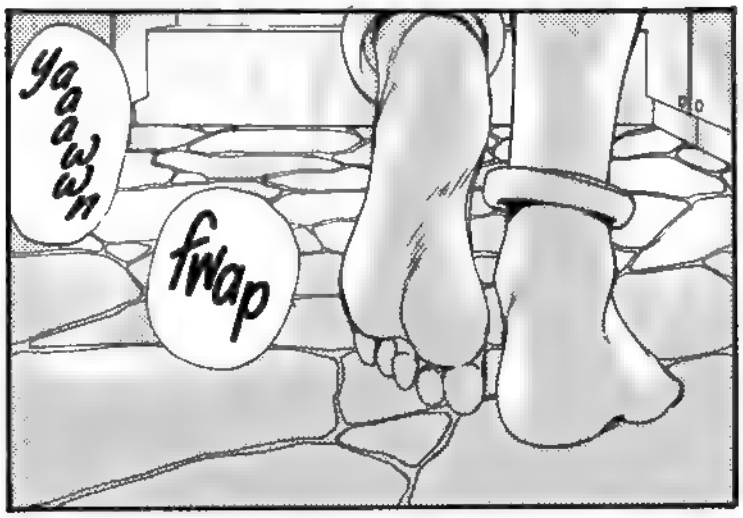
KREEEK

urg

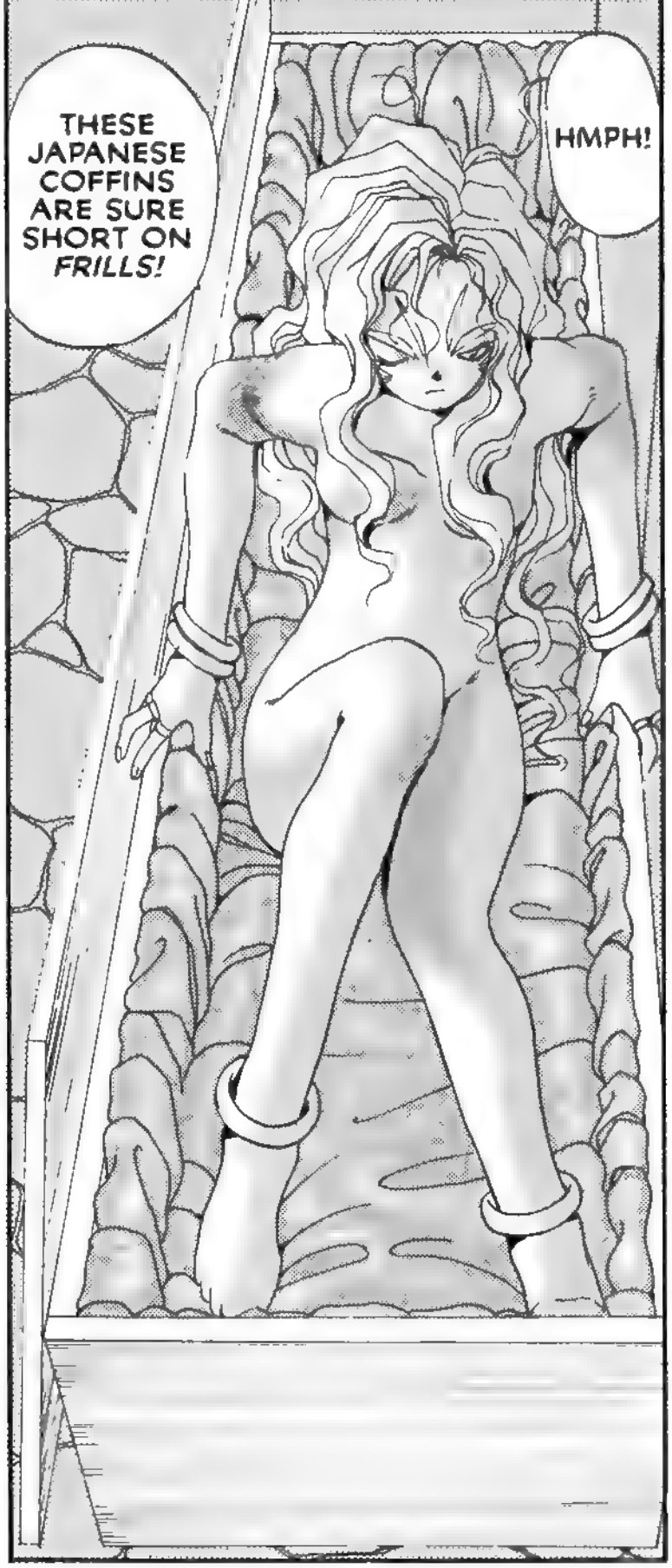
klunk

hahh

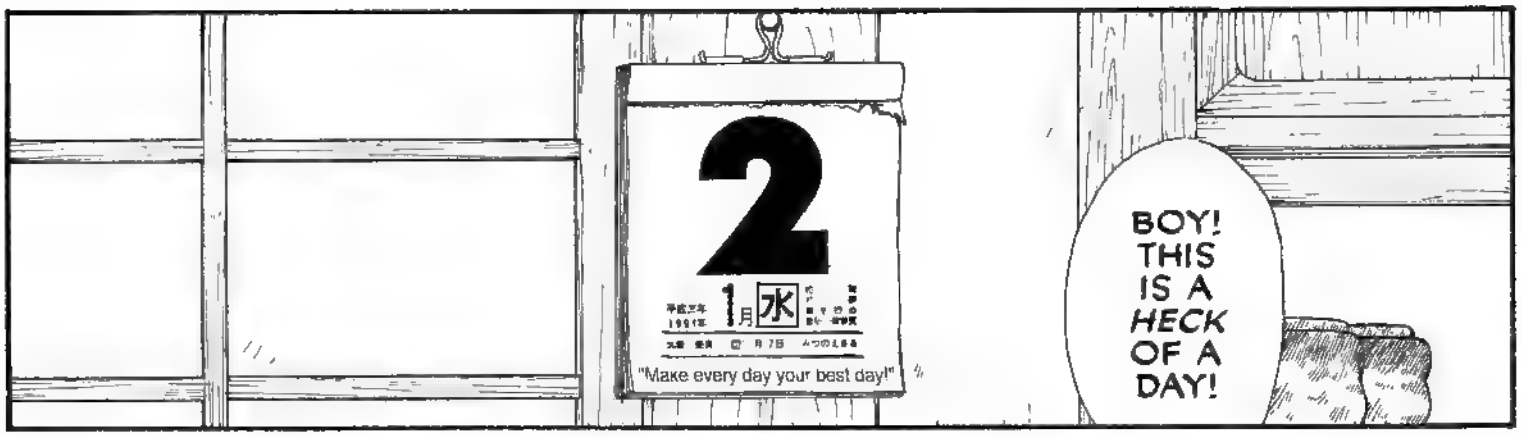
hahh

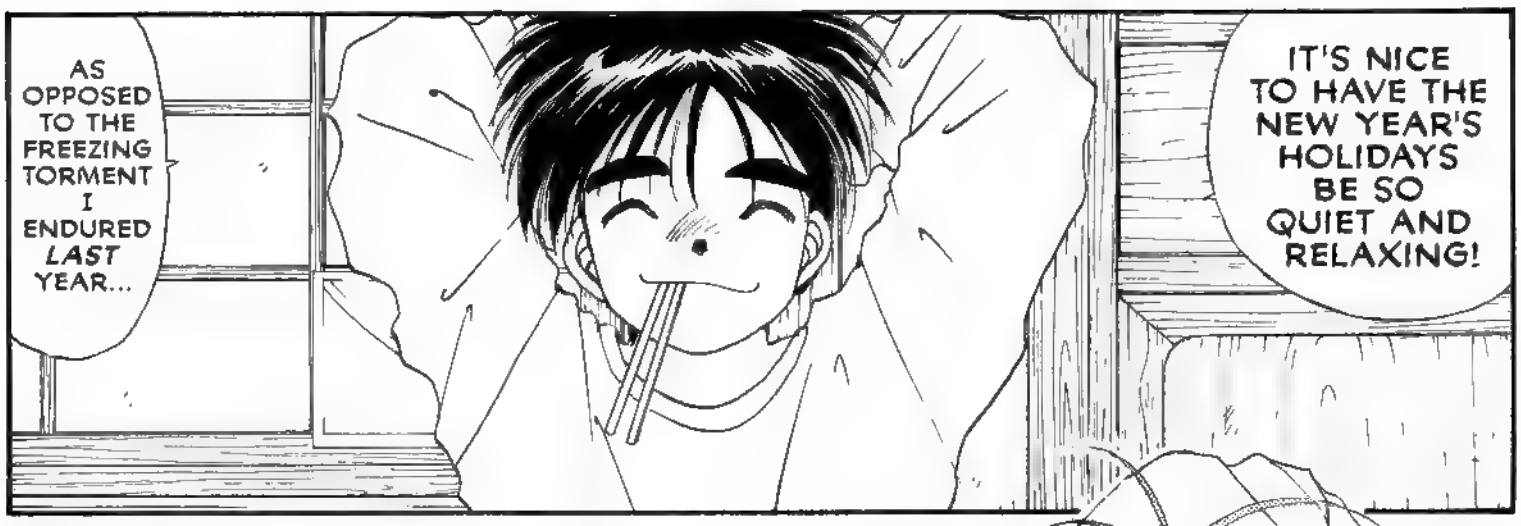

yaaawn
frwap

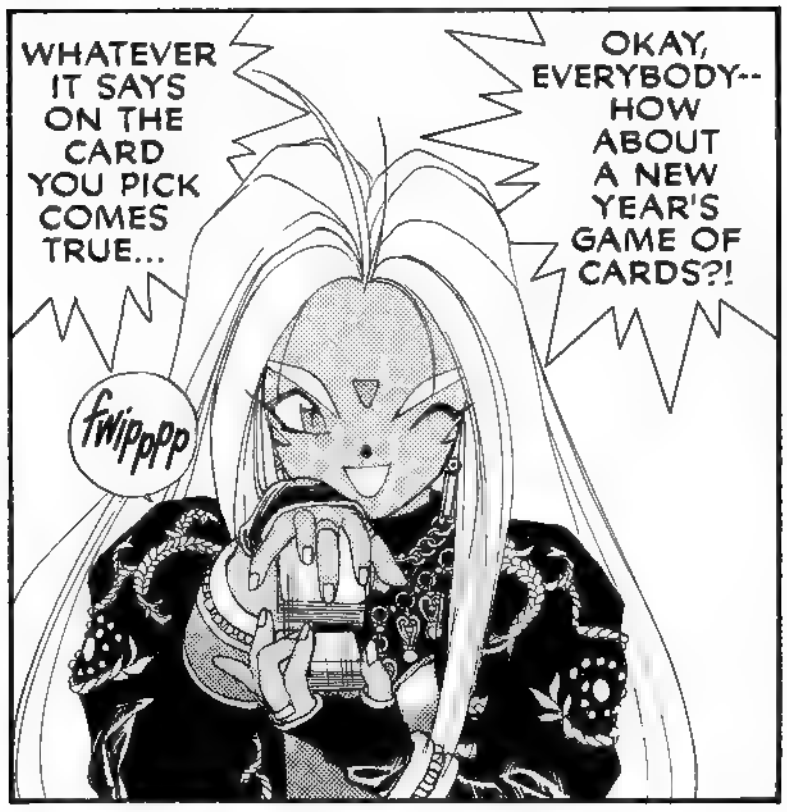
nngg!
THAT DAMNED URD REALLY DID A NUMBER ON ME. I SLEPT LIKE AN UNHOLY LOG.
EZRAK
I WONDER WHAT DAY IT IS HERE ON EARTH, ANYWAY?


THESE JAPANESE COFFINS ARE SURE SHORT ON FRILLS!
HMPH!

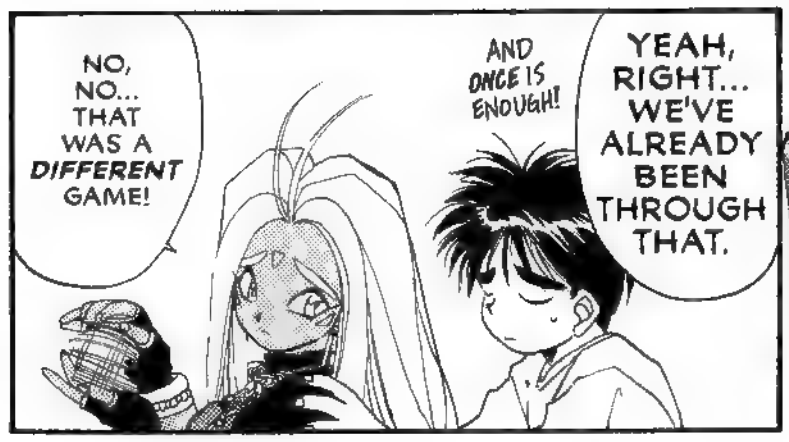
SSSSSHHHHH!!
--BECAUSE EVERY DAY'S GOING TO BE A DAY IN HELL WHILE I'M AROUND!
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER FOR YOU, KEIICHI--


2
1月 水
"Make every day your best day!"
BOY! THIS IS A *HECK* OF A DAY!


AS OPPOSED TO THE FREEZING TORMENT I ENDURED *LAST* YEAR...
IT'S NICE TO HAVE THE NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAYS BE SO QUIET AND RELAXING!


WHATEVER IT SAYS ON THE CARD YOU PICK COMES TRUE...
OKAY, EVERYBODY-- HOW ABOUT A NEW YEAR'S GAME OF CARDS?!
fwipppp

AND WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM MARA FOR QUITE A WHILE, HAVE WE?


NO, NO... THAT WAS A *DIFFERENT* GAME!
AND *ONCE* IS ENOUGH!
YEAH, RIGHT... WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THAT.

HE ALREADY *LIVES* IN A TEMPLE!

WHAT'S HE NEED A GOOD-LUCK CHARM FOR ANY-WAY? I MEAN...

I DUNNO WHY I'M GOING TO ALL THIS TROUBLE FOR MY DUMB BROTHER...

HMM... WHAT'S KEEPING MEGUMI? SHE'S LATE!

OH, IS YOUR SISTER COMING OVER TODAY?

BRRMMR

BESIDES, IT'S *COLD* RIDING AROUND ON THIS BIKE...

chatter chatter

BEING IN A *CAR* WOULD BE NICE...

HEH-HEH-HEH!

SO, LITTLE BRAT! YOU'RE KEIICHI'S SISTER, EH?

IT SHALL BE JUST AS YOU WISH!

YOUR *BEING*... IN A CAR!

KEN

GET OFF!

KAKKA

KEIICHI AND *ALL* HIS FRIENDS WILL BE GETTING THE *SAME TREAT-MENT!!*

NYA-HA-HA!! DON'T FEEL *TOO* BAD, KID!!

step

A TRICYCLE? IT HAS TO BE SOME-THING THAT *ROLLS*...

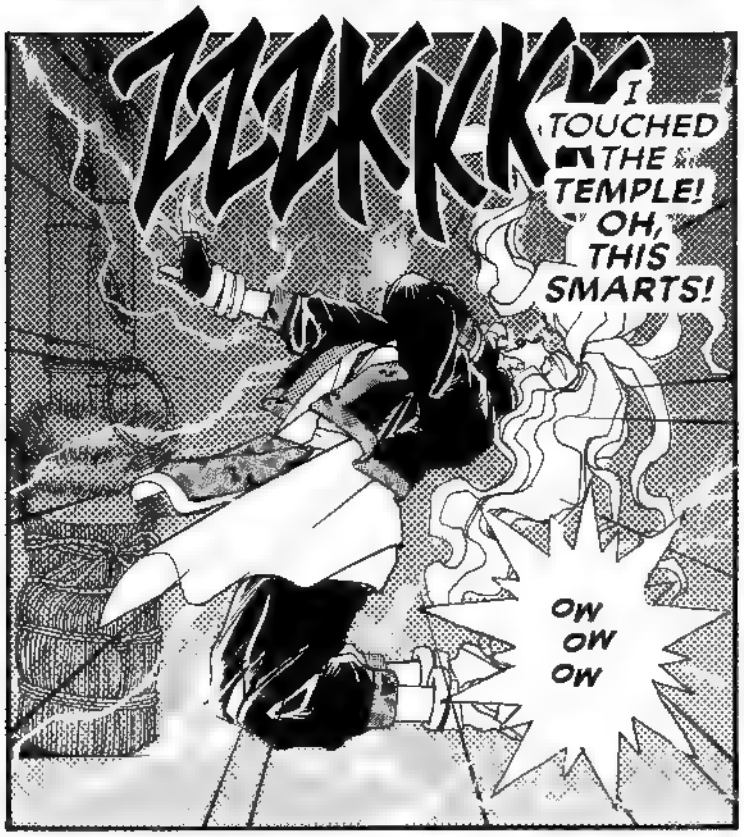
HMM... WHAT SHOULD I TURN KEIICHI INTO?

...A-HA! TOILET PAPER!

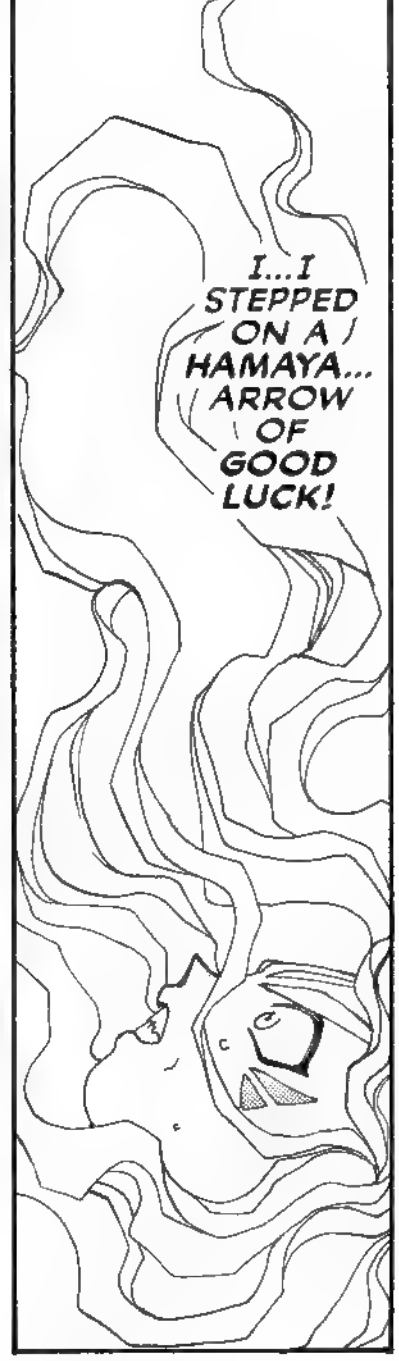
WHA--?!

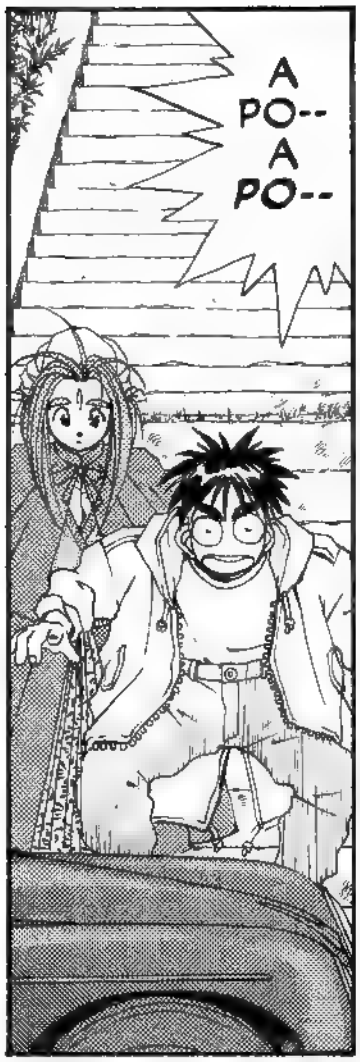
ZZRAKK

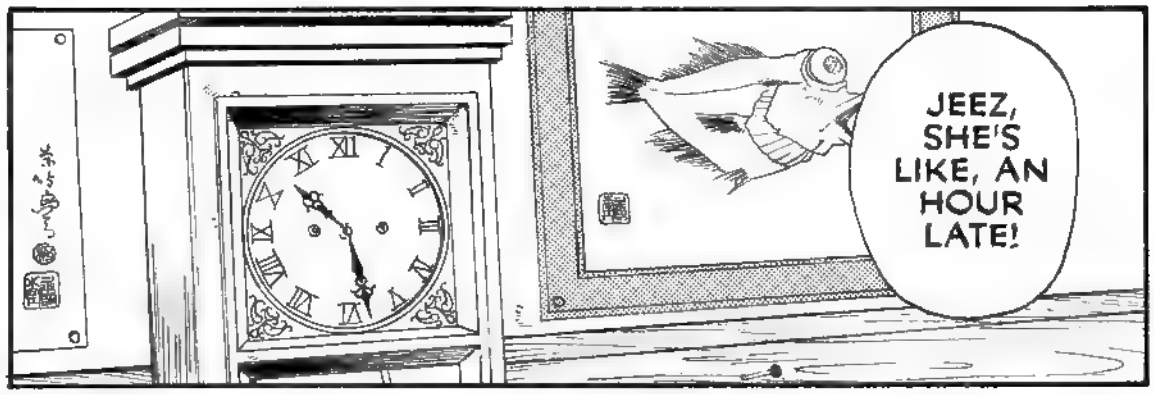
WOBBLING... MUST GRAB ONTO...

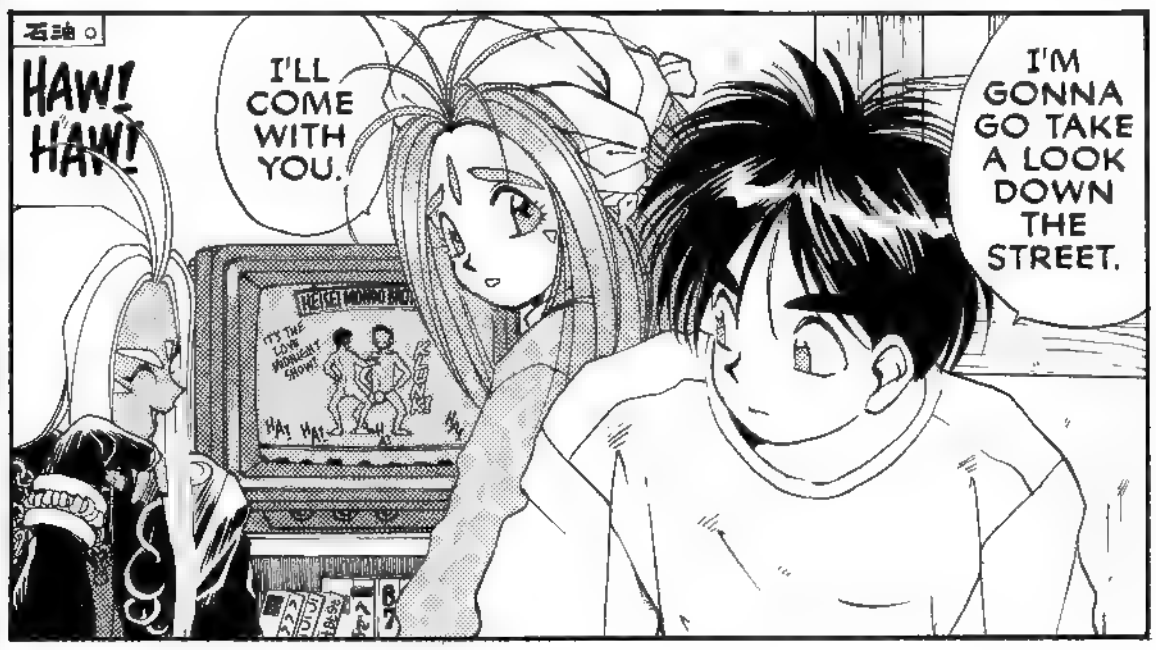

ZZZKKK
I TOUCHED THE TEMPLE! OH, THIS SMARTS!
OW OW OW

toink


I...I STEPPED ON A HAMAYA... ARROW OF GOOD LUCK!


A PO-- A PO--


JEEZ, SHE'S LIKE, AN HOUR LATE!


HAW! HAW!
I'LL COME WITH YOU.
I'M GONNA GO TAKE A LOOK DOWN THE STREET.

--A PORSCHE 356 SPEEDSTER !!!

THIS--

--COULD IT *BE?!*

MEGUMI? WHERE ARE YOU?

RIGHT *HERE* !!

KEI-chaaaan!

HUH?

DON'T YOU *GET* IT?

WOW!! LIKE KNIGHT RIDER!

THE *CAR*, STUPID!! THE *CAR* IS ME!!

geez!

SLAM

SLAM

YOUR OWN SISTER TURNS INTO A *CAR*. AND *THAT'S* ALL YOU CAN SAY?!

ER...

...I GOTTA HAND IT TO YA, SIS, YOU'RE A LOT BETTER LOOKING THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

I CANNOT FREE HER... BUT LET HER FORM HAVE MOTION!

YES! I CAN SEE MEGUMI'S SPIRIT EMANATING FROM THE CARBURETOR !!!

megumi's spirit

(EMANATING FROM THE CARBURETOR)

'CAUSE WATCH ME PULL THESE *DONUTS!* THESE ARE *DREAM DONUTS!*

SKREEEEEE

A *DREAM!!* THIS HAS TO BE A *DREAM!*

!!

OOOG...

MARA?! DID YOU TURN MY SISTER INTO A *PORSCHE 356*?!

OH--! HI. DO I KNOW YOU?

HEAD HURTS.

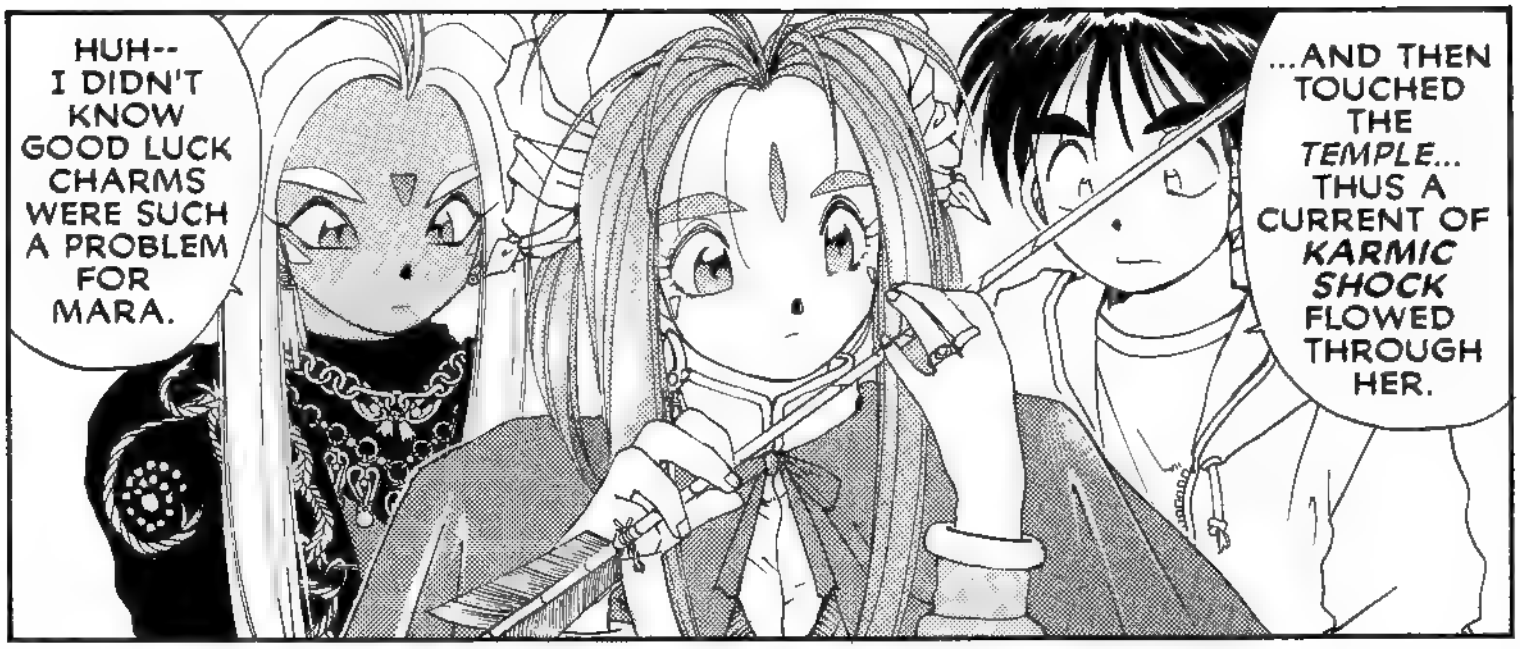
UM.

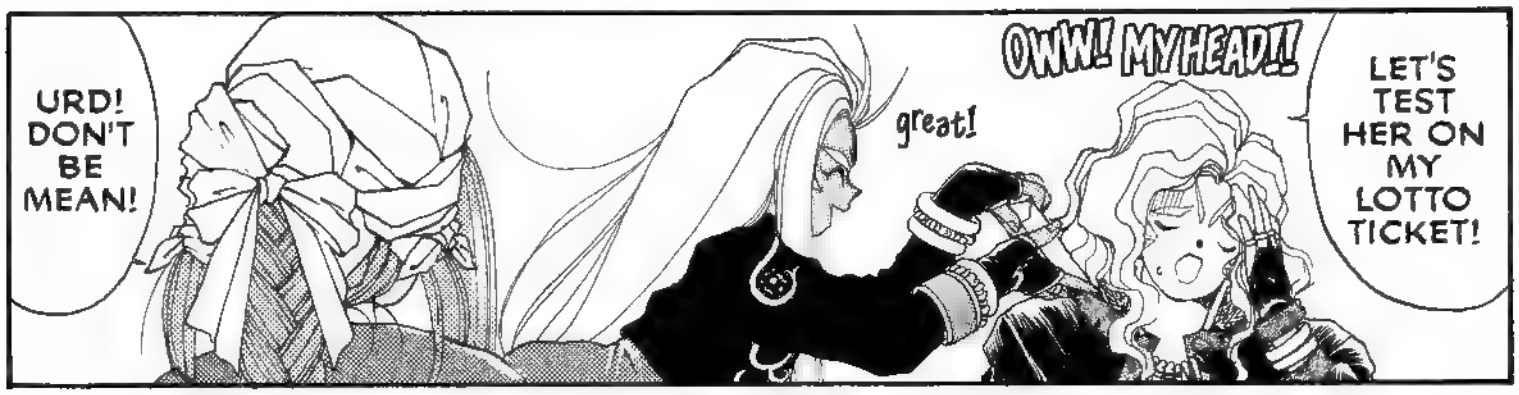
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE STEPPED ON THIS *HAMA-YA*...

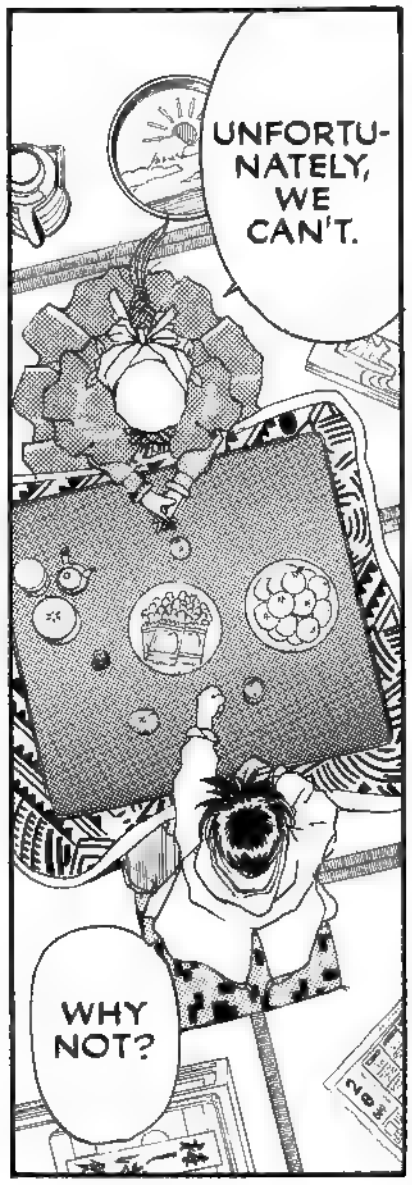
huh?!

huh?!

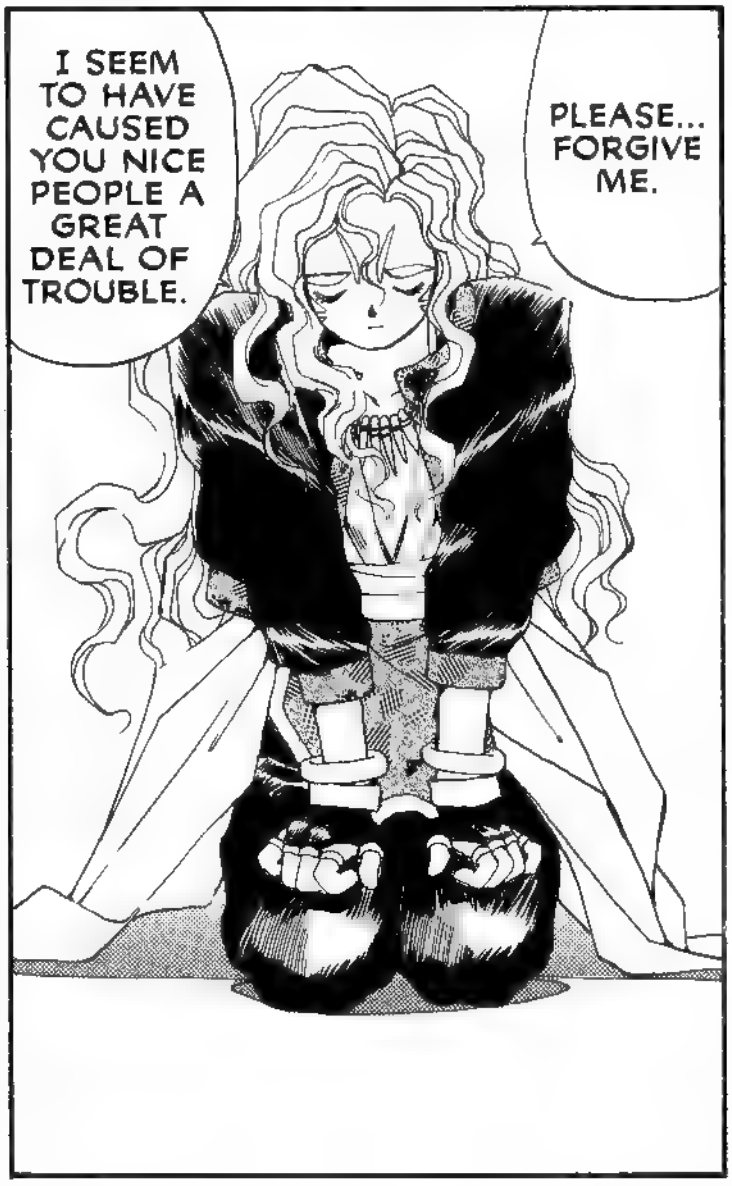
huh?!


HUH-- I DIDN'T KNOW GOOD LUCK CHARMS WERE SUCH A PROBLEM FOR MARA.
...AND THEN TOUCHED THE *TEMPLE*... THUS A CURRENT OF ***KARMIC SHOCK*** FLOWED THROUGH HER.


URD! DON'T BE MEAN!
great!
OWW! MY HEAD!!
LET'S TEST HER ON MY LOTTO TICKET!


UNFORTU-NATELY, WE CAN'T.
WHY NOT?

SHE'S A LOT NICER WITHOUT HER *MEMORY*... WHY DON'T WE JUST LEAVE HER THE WAY SHE IS?


I SEEM TO HAVE CAUSED YOU NICE PEOPLE A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE.
PLEASE... FORGIVE ME.

--MEGUMI WILL BE STUCK LIKE THIS FOR THE *REST OF HER LIFE...?*

SO, IF MARA DOESN'T GET HER MEMORY BACK--

BECAUSE WE CAN'T LIFT THE SPELL MARA PUT ON MEGUMI UNLESS WE KNOW THE *PASSWORD...*

...AND THERE ARE AN *INFINITE* NUMBER OF POSSIBLE PASSWORD COMBINATIONS.

HONK!-HONK!

I'M A *CAR*, AND I EXPECT SOME *DRIVE-THRU* SERVICE!!

HEY!! HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA KEEP ME WAITING ?!

YOU INSENSITIVE *JERK!!*

CALM DOWN, WILLYA?! I MEAN, HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET THE CHANCE TO TRY OUT A CAR LIKE *THAT?*

VROOM!

MAYBE YOU'D LIKE THIS TREAD ON YOUR *PULL-OVER!*

SORRY TO BE SO MUCH TROUBLE.

...WE DECIDED WE'D BETTER FIGURE OUT A WAY TO CURE YOUR AMNESIA.

AND SO...

I'VE HEARD THE BEST CURE FOR MEMORY LOSS IS--

OKAY, *HERE'S* AN IDEA...

oop!

jeez

ARE YOU SURE *YOU'RE* NOT A DEMON, URD?

YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING TOO MUCH DAY-TIME TV!

WHMP

THUD

--A SUDDEN BLOW TO THE HEAD!!

I THINK THOSE ARE CURES FOR *HICCUPS*, BELL-DANDY.

...OR DRINKING A GLASS OF WATER REALLY FAST?

WHAT ABOUT HOLDING YOUR BREATH AS LONG AS YOU CAN...

I'LL TAKE THAT RISK!

BUT... WHAT IF THAT JUST MAKES HER CONDITION *WORSE?*

BABBLE BABBLE

ACTUALLY, IF THIS IS A *MAGICAL* SITUATION...

...WOULD GIVING HER THE EXACT SAME SHOCK AGAIN HELP?

DISCHARGE IT OR SOMETHIN'? I DUNNO.

...I MUST TRY TO AMEND MY PAST ACTIONS.

EVEN IF I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT EVIL I HAVE DONE, SURELY...

OKAY, HERE GOES...

THAT MUST BE THE EFFECT OF THE ARROW, TOO.

OWWWW! MY HEAAADD!

LOOK--A LUCKY TURTLE!

ER... DON'T YOU THINK SHE'S TURNED OUT A LITTLE *TOO* NICE?

AAH!!

toink

GAP

grin

worry

fret

AEE!!

...SHE MUST'VE ACQUIRED *IMMUNITY* TO THE ARROW-- IT CAN'T AFFECT HER ANY-MORE!

SHE'S STILL *POLITE?!* ***IT DIDN'T WORK!***

OH, NO...

I'M SORRY...

YOU AND I HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE CHILD-HOOD.

OH, *MARA!* I'M NOT GOING TO ABANDON YOU.

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOUR POOR SISTER, YOU COULD JUST LEAVE ME TO...TO F-FEND FOR... M-MYSELF...

oooohh

BUT I...I JUST DON'T *KNOW!*

PLEASE FORGIVE ME...IF ONLY I COULD REMEMBER THE PASSWORD, EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE!

sniff sob

WAIT HERE, MARA.

I'LL THINK OF SOME-THING.

LUCKY *YOU,* MARA...

BLUP BLUP BLUP

BLRRPLE

...WITH URD'S SPECIAL AMNESIA ANTIDOTE, *URDROGEN-X®!!*

HEE-HEE-HEE! YOU'LL RECOVER YOUR MEMORY IN A JIFFY...

WHAT ?!

EEEK!! STOP IT!!

MARA, DEAR-EST!

SHIPP

WHADDAYA *MEAN*, "SHE RAN AWAY" ...?!

ARGGH! YOU *ALWAYS* SCREW UP, KEIICH!!!

HONK! HONK!

SLAM SLAM

VROOM VROOM

WELL, LET'S GO AFTER HER BEFORE SHE GETS TOO FAR.

!!

WHISH

WAIT A SECOND! I GET IT!! YOU AND BELL-DANDY ARE...

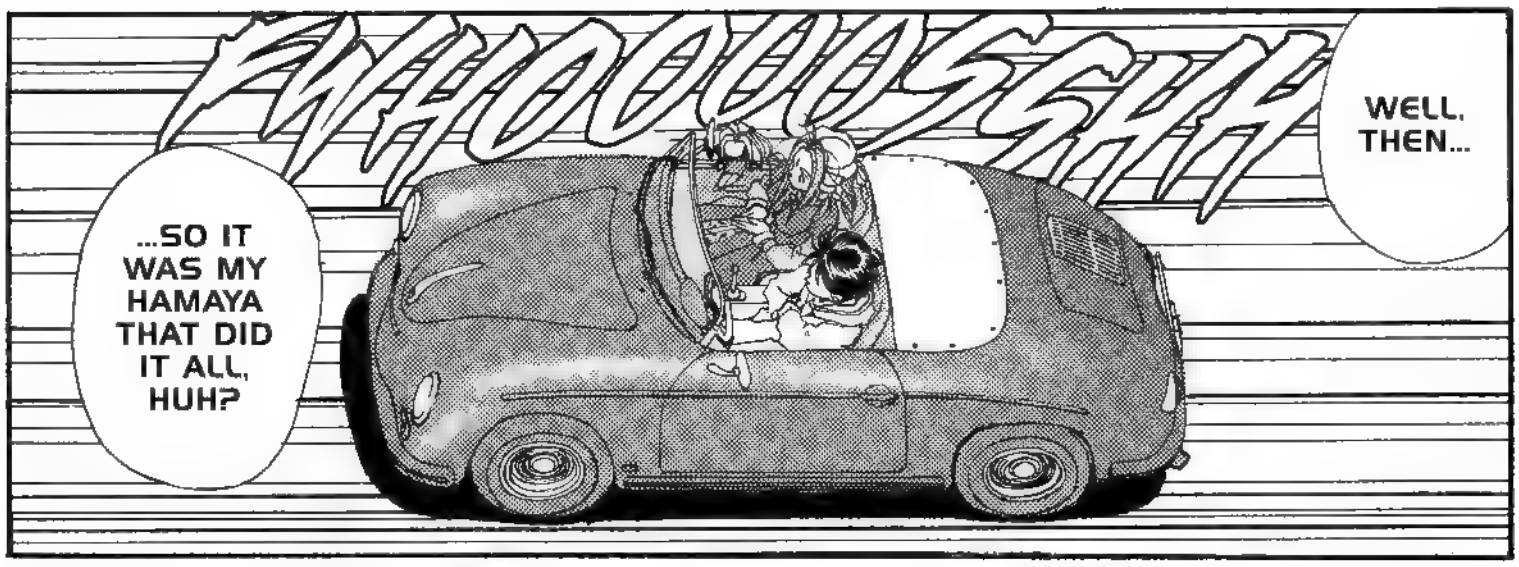
HEY, YOU'RE ONLY A TWO-SEATER I LIKE *COMFORT.*

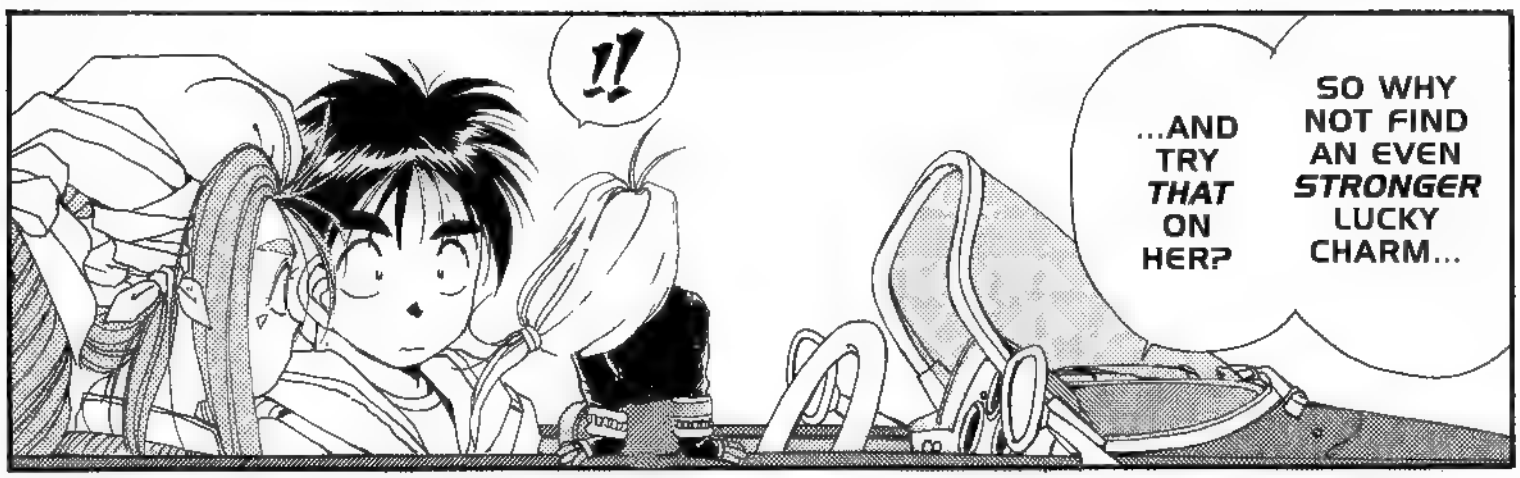
GACK! WHAT HAPPENED TO *URD?* HOW'D SHE GET SO *SMALL?!*

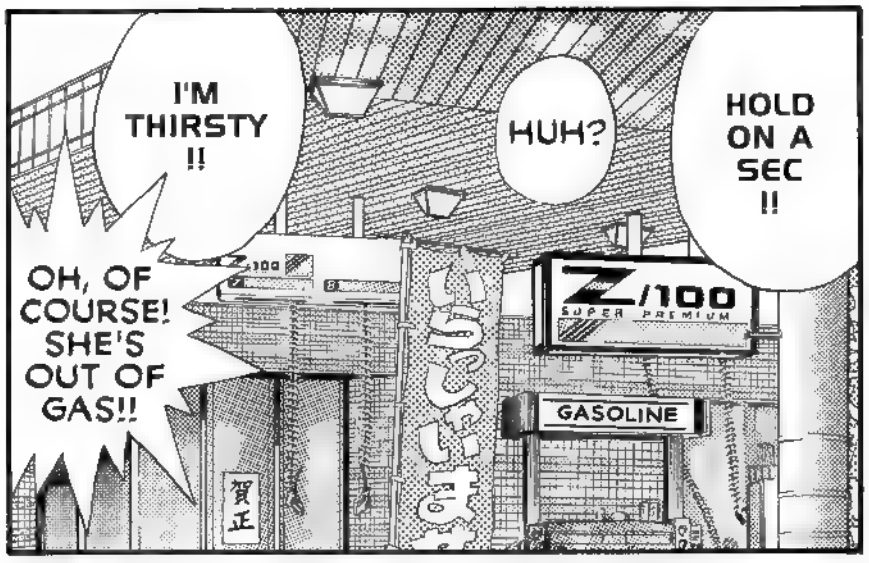
WOW! *GREAT!* SO THIS *MUST* BE A DREAM !!

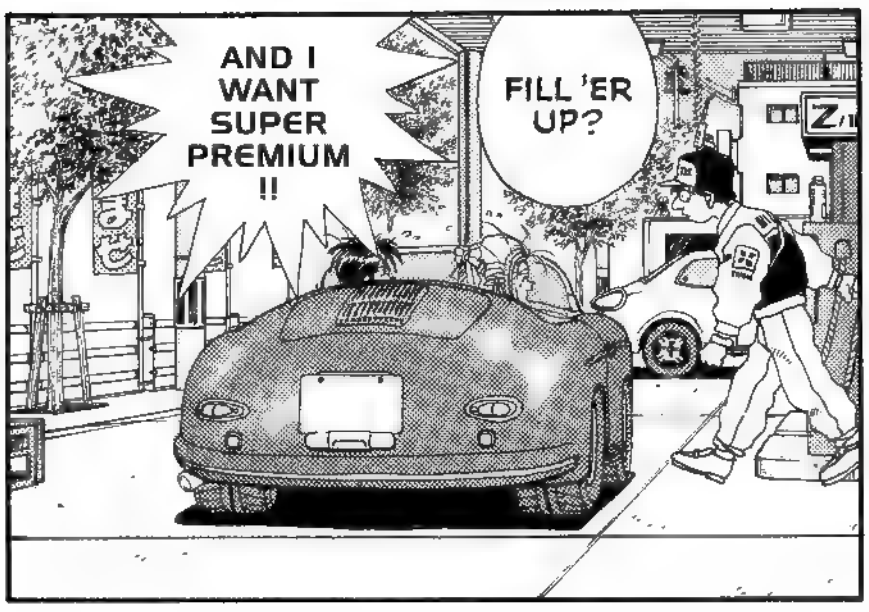
LIKE IN THAT *TV SHOW!*

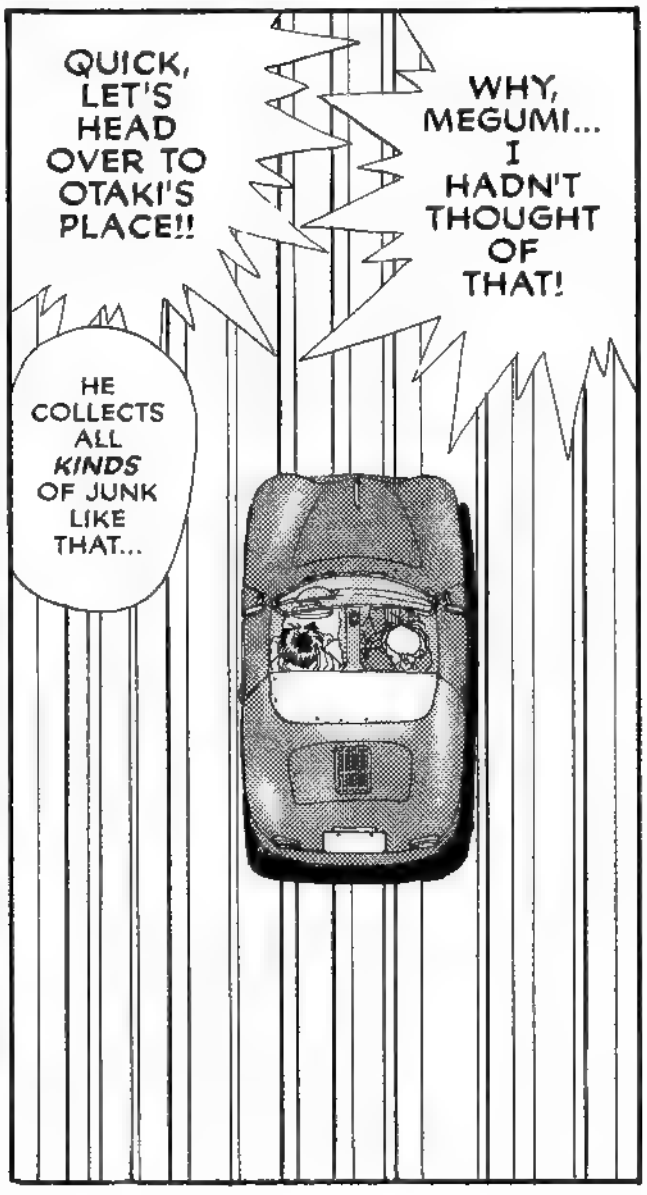
...WITCH-ES!!


FWHOOOSH
...SO IT WAS MY HAMAYA THAT DID IT ALL, HUH?
WELL, THEN...


!!
...AND TRY THAT ON HER?
SO WHY NOT FIND AN EVEN STRONGER LUCKY CHARM...


I'M THIRSTY !!
HUH?
HOLD ON A SEC !!
OH, OF COURSE! SHE'S OUT OF GAS!!
Z/100
SUPER PREMIUM
GASOLINE


AND I WANT SUPER PREMIUM !!
FILL 'ER UP?


QUICK, LET'S HEAD OVER TO OTAKI'S PLACE!!
WHY, MEGUMI... I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT!
HE COLLECTS ALL KINDS OF JUNK LIKE THAT...

MARA !!

MAYBE... MAYBE IT'D BE BETTER IN THE LONG RUN IF I NEVER REGAIN MY MEMORY...

OH, DEAR... I MUST'VE BEEN A REALLY AWFUL DEMON...

squeak

FOR MEGUMI'S SAKE, YOU'VE *GOT* TO REMEMBER--

IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR MEMORY BACK, MEGUMI WILL BE LIKE THAT ***FOREVER!!***

SHE'LL BE *VERY* EXPENSIVE TO MAINTAIN!!

FWAK

EEEYAAAA

WHOOSH

KRAK

Sssshhhhh

!

oooh...

--AND FOR YOUR *OWN* SAKE, TOO!!

DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU CURED ME, THAT I'D TELL YOU THE PASS-WORD?!

HAW HAW HAW!

FOOLS !!

...BUT WHAT WERE YOU *THINK-ING?!* HEH-HEH-HEH...!

THANK YOU...

...MY MIND IS NOW AS CLEAR AS AN UN-MUDDIED LAKE.

LUCKY GNOME!

ACK!

LUCKY CLOTH!

LUCKY CAT!

NO, WE DIDN'T.

ONE PASSWORD LATER

WE'D BETTER SEIZE THIS CHANCE AND PUT HER TO BED...

SHE'LL BE ASLEEP FOR A WHILE.

YEP... SAFER RIGHT HERE... IN THE OLD COFFIN.

WHAT?! YOU BROKE MY *TANUKI?!* THAT THING WAS *EXPENSIVE!!*

WELL, NOT QUITE EVERY-THING.

grovel grovel

THAT WAS THE *WEIRDEST* DREAM I'VE EVER HAD!

AND I OVER-SLEPT, TOO...

AND SO EVERY-THING TURNED OUT JUST FINE...

CHAPTER 30

Engine O' Mystery

WINTER VACATION IS OVER, AND NEKOMI TECH'S STUDENTS ARE RETURNING TO CAMPUS... AND THE SHELTER OF THEIR DORMS.

猫実工大自動車部

OF COURSE, IN THIS BITTER SEASON, LET US REMEMBER...

NOW LISSEN UP!!

THE (CURRENT SITE OF THE PREVIOUSLY BULLDOZED) NEKOMI MOTOR CLUB

...NOT ALL OF US HAVE SHELTER.

猫実工大自動車部

N-N-N-N-N-NEVER BETTER.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, KEIICHI?

CHITTER CHATTER

DA *PUNY*? YES, HOW LONG CAN *DEY* SURVIVE UNDER DESE CONDI-TIONS?!

FOR A MAN SUCH AS *ME*, DA HOWLIN' WIND IS NO DISCOMFORT! BUT WHUT ABOUT DA *WEAK*?

DON' *DESPAIR!* YOU CAN HELP!

...AND 15,400 YEN FOR THAT *BITCHIN' PAINT JOB* ON THE *SHINDEN*...

MINUS 5150 YEN FOR *BEER AND SODA*...

..THAT'S 4530 NET.

WE USED *SCHOOL* MATERIALS FOR THE RESTORATION WORK, SO *THAT* COST ZERO!!

grroaaann!

I FIGURED...

HM! OTAKI?

WH-WH-WHAT ABOUT OUR P-P-PROCEEDS FROM THE CAMPUS FESTIVAL?

--25,080 YEN GROSS.

LESSEE... 1254 PEOPLE AT 200 YEN A HEAD--

NICE *PLAN,* TAMIYA!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S GOT US DOING *ENVELOPE STUFFING!*

STUFF... FOLD...

BUT IT'S KIND OF FUN!

STUFF... FOLD...

ONE HOUR LATER

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE MORE MONEY? *SURE!* WE *ALL* DO!

IF *ONLY* THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY! IF *ONLY!!*

FRIZZAKK

ARRGGHH!! I'M GOING *CRAZY! NUTS!!* WE'LL *NEVER* RAISE THE MONEY LIKE THIS!!

I HEARD THAT!

...*WHAT* LOOK?

GEE...

...WHAT'S *THAT* LOOK FOR?

พงษ์ศ

ANYWAY, LEAVE EVERYTHING TO ME! I'M FEELIN' *LUCKY* TONIGHT!!

KA-CHING!

...And Form... Super Combo-Lucky-God!!

RMBB

RMBB

KA-CHING!

2. LUCKY BADGER

1. LUCKY MALLET

3. LUCKY DOLPHIN

4. LUCKY CAT'S PAW

5. LUCKY GNOME'S CAPE

6. LUCKY BANNER

WHAM!

FWWKR

Come, O Six Gods of Fortune...

HOW'S *THAT?!*

...!

...YOU'LL BE MAKING THAT MONEY IN *NO TIME!*

WITH *THIS* THING GIVING YOU GOOD FORTUNE...

WOTTA FIND FOR MY COLLEC-TION!!

LISSEN, YOU *GOTTA* LEMME HAVE IT! I'LL PAY YOU *ANY-THING!*

ON SECOND THOUGHT, MAYBE WE'LL KEEP IT.

KEIICHI !!

I DUNNO... *NORMAL* PEOPLE ARE GONNA THINK THIS THING IS PRETTY WEIRD...

ONE OF YOU SIGN FOR THIS?

NEKOMI SOME-THIN' CLUB...?

BRUB

HMM...

猪突猛進

WHAT IS IT?

HUH?

FIRST PRIZE ¥500,000 YEN!

SECOND ANNUAL ECONOMY RUN INVITATION

DATE JANUARY 29 1991
TIME 10 A M
PLACE SHIN-OKAMINO RACEWAY

Dear Sir or Madam
You are hereby cordially invited to participate in our second annual Economy Run
With the current political instability in the Middle East, it behooves our petroleum-dependent society to seek alternative energy-conserving sources of fuel for our means of transport
Your participation in this fuel-efficiency competition would therefore be deeply appreciated
Sincerely yours,
The Japan Energy Conservation Society

FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND YEN?!

WOW !!

huh?

THE "JAPAN ENERGY CONSER-VATION SOCIETY" ...?

FORTUNE HAS OPENED ITS *BIG GAPIN' MOUTH* T' *SMILE* UPON US!

DAT'S HOW WE'S GONNA REBUILD OUR CLUB-HOUSE!

NOPE! LET'S SEE THAT ENVE-LOPE...

I DIN'T KNOW ABOUT IT! YOU ENTER US, OTAKI?

HOW COME YOU DIDN'T MENTION THIS CONTEST BEFORE?

!!

NEKOMI TECH FOUR WHEELS CLUB
18-7 UMATEBUKURO, UEKIJO-CHO,
NEKOMI CITY, JAPAN

WHAT DO WE *DO?*

THERE'S ONLY ONE *THING* TO DO...

DAT CASH NOW BELONGS TO DA *NEKOMI TECH MOTOR CLUB!!*

HUZZAH!!

WE NEVER SAW NO ENVELOPE!

...DESTROY DA EVIDENCE!!

RIP RIP RIP RIP

NIT PWC
猫実工大四輪部

...THANK YOU, MY LOVELY SPIES.

I WAS PLANNING TO GRIND THEM FURTHER INTO THE MUD BY WINNING THAT MONEY FOR OUR CLUB, BUT

HMM... I SEE.

WE'D BETTER TELL PRESIDENT AOSHIMA ABOUT *THIS!!*

HMPH!! THOSE ROTTEN MOTOR CLUB THIEVES!! DON'T THEY HAVE ANY *SHAME?*

SIR?

YES... *ALLOW* THEM TO ENTER THE RACE...

LET THEM BE.

WELL... THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SKIN A GEEK.

tmp

TRYING TO MAKE THE CONNECT-ING ROD LIGHTER...

WHAT-CHA DOIN'?

KZZZZZ

ACROSS CAMPUS...

N.I.T F.W.C

NEKOMI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
FOUR WHEELS CLUB

YO, MORISATO-- I'M GONNA GO PICK US UP SOME ALUMINUM FRAME MATERIAL.

"PICK IT UP"? FROM *WHERE?*

I WANNA MILL THE HEAD AND PISTON CROWN TOO, BUT I CAN'T 'CAUSE THAT WOULD UP THE DISPLACEMENT. A PORT 'N' POLISH IS OKAY, THOUGH.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO IS GET A CERAMIC ROD AND PISTON, BUT THERE'S NO TIME, SO...

...THEN I'M GONNA PUT IN SPLIT-ELECTRODE TWIN PLUGS TO UP THE FUEL EFFI-CIENCY.

...

TROLLS?

REALLY... THESE GODDESSES...

JUST LEAVE IT UP TO THE TROLLS WHO POWER THE ENGINE, OKAY?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ALL THOSE LITTLE DETAILS!

NOW WE GOTTA HIT... I MEAN, HIT UP, DA THE BICYCLE CLUB FOR SOME *WHEELS!!*

AWRIGHT, WE GOT DA *SOOPAH-STRUC-TURE!*

HUZZAH#2!

WHATEVER IT TAKES!!

NOW *I'M* FREEZING!

crumple

THIEVES!

....

fwap

WE BORROW YOUR WINDO FRAMES.

SIGNED, ~~THE MOTOR~~ ANONYMOU

CHALLENGE TO MINIMUM

ECONOMY RUN

500 THOUSAND EN

...IS BASICALLY A FUEL CONSER-VATION CONTEST.

CAR INSPECT

THE ECON-OMY RUN...

THE CAR THAT USES UP THE LEAST FUEL WINS.

T'ANKS...

...OKAY. YOU PASSED.

NEKOMI TECH MOTOR CLUB? LESSEE...

EACH CAR CARRIES ONE LITER OF GAS AND GOES A FIXED DISTANCE WITHIN A FIXED PERIOD OF TIME.

WE *ACED* IT!!

HOW DID THE INSPEC-TION GO?

OH!

EVEN BY *THIS* CLUB'S STAND-ARDS...

...I GOTTA ADMIT, THIS IS ONE WEIRD MACHINE.

...IT *IS* A BIT ODD, ISN'T IT?

YES...

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A WAGER?

...OUR CLUB'S MACHINE LOOKS QUITE RESPECTABLE. AND WE DID IT *WITHOUT* WINDOW FRAMES.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

AOSHIMA !!

00

NITFWC

IT AIN'T NO *WAGER*... IT'S A ***BET!***

*...BUT IF **WE LOSE**, WE DON'T LOSE **NUTHIN'**... CUZ WE GOT NUTHIN'!!*

AIEE!! ***NO!!***

*MMM... LESSEE... DAT MEANS... DUH...IF **WE** WIN, WE GET DA PRIZE MONEY **AN'** A WHOLE NEW CLUBHOUSE...*

NO, TAMIYA! ***DON'T*** USE YOUR BRAIN!

...GETS TO TAKE OVER THE ***LOSING*** TEAM'S CLUB-HOUSE!

THE *WINNING* TEAM...

ALL CARS, LINE UP ON THE GRID!!

START

5 MINUTES TO STARTING TIME!

...WE'VE GOT TO ASSUME THAT AOSHIMA HAS SOMETHING UP HIS DESIGNER SLEEVE.

BE CAREFUL, BELL-DANDY...

7

AND BESIDES...

DON'T WORRY, KEIICHI.

WE HAVE *THIS* ADVANTAGE... I'M THE LIGHTEST DRIVER IN THE RACE.

I SNUGGLED UP TO ONE OF THE INSPEC-TORS...

...AND SLIPPED THESE KEROSENE CAPSULES INTO THEIR *GAS TANK.*

DID YOU DO AS INSTRUCT-ED?

YES, SIR!

*HOW COULD THEY POSSIBLY HOPE TO BEAT OUR **EXPENSIVE** TITANIUM AND CARBON-FIBER RACER?!*

EVERY LAST COMPONENT IS LIKE A FRIEND TO ME.

...WE ASSEMBLED THIS CAR OUR-SELVES... PART BY PART.

ATTENTION-- NEKOMI TECH MOTOR CLUB, TO THE STARTING GRID!!

bloop

DAMN! A DIRECT HIT!!

C-5!!

IT'S ALL UP TO BELL NOW, ANYWAY!

HUH? WHY?

C'MON, GUYS, GET SERIOUS!!

IN AN ECONOMY RACE, YOU DON'T WANT TO RUN YOUR ENGINE ALL THE TIME.

FWHOOOSSHH

7

NITMCC

...LET'S GO AGAIN !!

FSSSSHHH

OKAY, FELLOWS... YOUR NAP IS OVER...

...REPEATING THE PROCESS IN A CYCLE.

INSTEAD, YOU ACCELERATE, THEN COAST...

7

CHIBA COLLEGE WE NEVER LOSE

!!

SPIN SPIN SPIN

7

W- WHAT'S *WRONG* ?!

OH, NO!

BELL ?!

KEIICHI!! THE *ENGINE* ...!

AH, NEVER MIND.

SNORE! ZZZ---Z!

TAMIYA! OTAKI! ***HELP!***

NOT *THAT* AGAIN.

ARE THOSE TROLLS GOOFING OFF?

GEEZ, IT'S ***BLACK*** WITH CARBON!

UH... BELLDANDY.

HMM, PERHAPS THAT'S IT, URD...

klak

klak

um...

UH-OH!

GIBBER! TROLLS! HA-HA! TROLLS IN THE ENGINE!

heh-heh!

WHY AREN'T YOU BOYS WORKING LIKE YOU SHOULD?

RMBL

RMBL

'CAUSE WE'RE *NAUGHTY OLD* TROLLS!

LET'S *GET* 'EM!

URD !!

DIVIDE AND *CAPTURE* !!

KRUNG

GRAB!

GACK !!

Bell-dandy Super Attrac-tion!

OH, DEAR. ONE'S STILL MISSING.

NO, THAT TECHNIQUE ONLY WORKS IF THEY'RE STILL CLOSE BY...

ALL ACCOUNT-ED FOR?

OOH...

hahh

hah

LOOKS LIKE I GOT AWAY...

THE PAIN... *IN MY HEART...*

OOH, THE *PAIN...*

!!

...I BEG YOU...

...TOUCH ME...

sigh

gasp

OOH...

PLEASE...

ugh

WHERE?

WHERE?

T-T-TOUCH YOU ...?!

'CAUSE A' DIS CRAP !!

NOW, TELL ME-- WHY DID YOU BOYS SLACK OFF ON THE JOB?

STOMP STOMP STOMP

ON THE BOTTOM OF MY HEELS, SUCKER.

PLEASE BELIEVE ME...

...THAT WAS AN ACT OF SABOTAGE BY...BY THE ***BIG MONEY MEN!!***

AOSHI-MA!! THAT ***SCUM!***

EVEN IF HE ***DIDN'T*** DO IT... HE'S ***STILL*** SCUM!

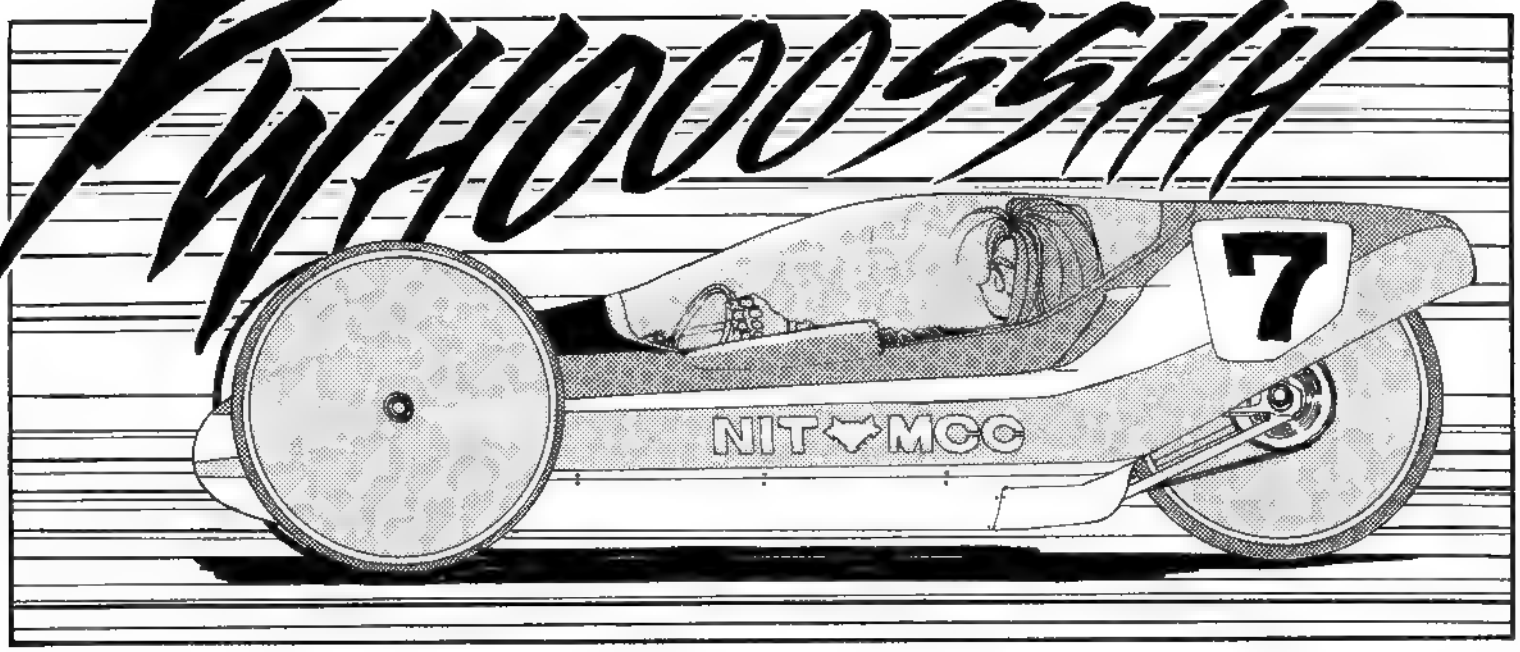
huh? SMELLS LIKE ***KERO-SENE!!***

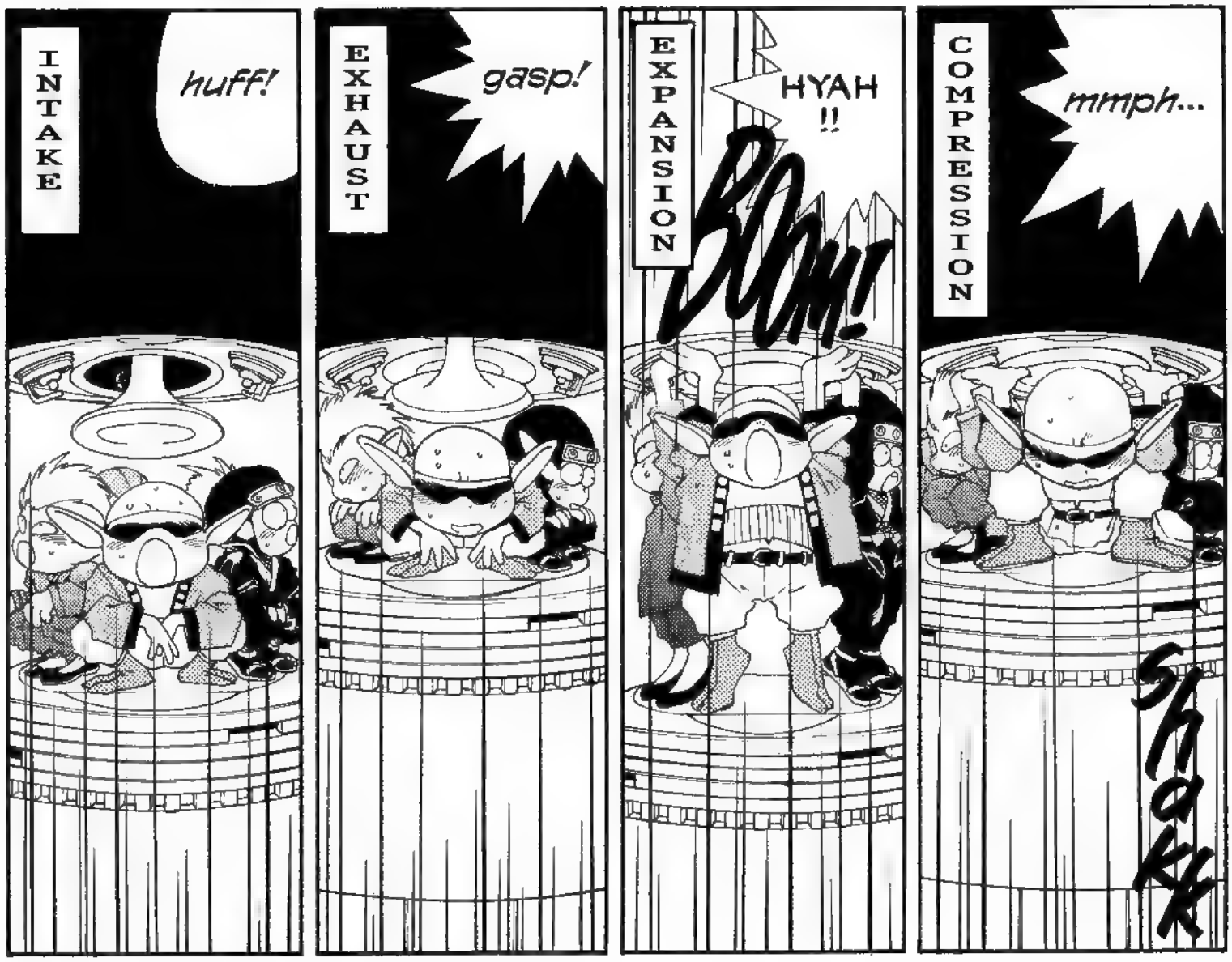
HOW'S YA EXPECT US T' DO OUR JOBS WIT' DESE ***IMPURITIES?*** IT'S AGAINST TROLL UNION ***REGULATIONS!***

OH, *HO!* EXPLOITERS A' DA WOIKIN' TROLL, AY? DEY TINK DEY CAN JOIK US AROUN' LIKE DAT?

C'MON, BOYS! WE GONNA SHOW *DEM* WHO MOVES DA WORLD!!!

KUHOOSHH





(REPEAT 1500 TIMES PER MINUTE = 3000RPM)

POOR (and I do mean *poor*) ***FOOLS!!*** AT THAT PACE THEY'LL USE UP FAR TOO MUCH FUEL!!

HUP-TWO-THREE-FOUR!!

HUP-TWO-THREE-FOUR!!

HUP-TWO-THREE-FOUR!!

HUP-TWO-THREE-FOUR!!

VROOOO

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Welcome back! Once again, we present an economy-size letter that rules "Enchantress" like a tyrant. As with Ms. Swain from Vol. 24, it's nice to hear from a local reader. The "Powell's" to which our latest correspondent refers is a strong supporter of Dark Horse Manga—its main store in downtown Portland is perhaps the largest used bookstore in the world. It's exactly **the kind of place you would find Yomiko Readman. But unfortunately, I never have.**

Hello!

I've been teaching myself Japanese for a while now. Manga and anime are very much part of that effort, and I love *AMS/OMG!* **[*Aa Megamisama/Oh My Goddess!*—the Japanese and English versions of the title—CGH]** It's a great story with great visuals. (One image I wish they'd used in the anime was when Belldandy sat on the bottom edge of the mirror as if it was a windowsill.) And, I'm enough of a purist to prefer unflipped manga like your latest volumes and reissues.

Actually, I've had better luck tracking down *AMS/OMG!* in audiovisual formats than in print. I have your reissues of volumes 1 and 2; volume 22 is set aside. Between Powell's and Kinokuniya, I also got the first three tankoubon in Japanese, plus the semi-encyclopedic *AMS Collection*, covering the series through 2004. In contrast, I have the first five DVDs of the TV anime, the complete OAV series, the movie, the movie soundtrack, and the *AMS Singles* CD. (It's not exactly a hardship to hear Kikuko Inoue saying or singing Belldandy's lines.) **[Kikuko Inoue also played Yoshiko Ueno, Kubo's girlfriend in *Otaku no Video*. So he ends up not only being dumped, but dumped by Belldandy. For an otaku, that's truly adding insult to injury. A rarely-remarked upon fact is that Ms. Inoue *also* played Super Idol Misty May. Considering the circumstances, you then begin to realize a new, psychologically disturbing level to *ONV*. Who knew there could be yet another level?—CGH]**

In his letter in Volume 2, Timotheus was trying to work out a timeline. Let's look at the clues we've been given.

The calendar on Sada's kitchen wall (chapter 2) shows the month of October, and the pattern of days matches 1988. That matches with Belldandy sweeping leaves at the temple (which was more conspicuous in the anime). In chapter 16, Keiichi reminds himself that it was the 25th. So, Belldandy came into Keiichi's life on 25 October 1988. (The moon was full, by the way.) **[I note with interest that in the Catholic Mass, the scripture reading for October 25, 1988 was Ephesians 5: 21-23, which has an odd resonance with *Oh My Goddess!*—CGH]**

The splash page for chapter 4 shows Belldandy walking in snow, but there's no snow in the actual story until the end of chapter 5, when we see a Christmas tree in Sayoko's apartment. Deciduous trees are still bare in chapter 6. It's not clear if the

greenery in chapter 7 is all evergreen, or if some deciduous trees are coming back.

After Megumi has passed her entrance exam, we learn (chapter 9) that there are just two weeks left before classes start. (Isn't that sorta last minute for entrance exams?) Since the traditional start of the Japanese school year is 1 April, that puts the exam in mid-March. In the anime, she'd already passed the entrance exam when she showed up just before White Day. **[In Japan, Valentine's Day is customarily for girls to give chocolates to boys; the boys reciprcate one month later with white chocolate; hence "White Day"—CGH]** That's 14 March, so the timing matches. Megumi entered the picture (chapter 8) on about 7 March 1989, at which point Belldandy and Keiichi had been living alone together for about four-and-a-half months without even kissing once. **[April 1, 1988 was a Friday; I understand that school in Japan usually begins on the first Monday in April, which would have been the 4th—CGH]**

Timotheus misunderstood the postmark date. In the Japanese calendar, 1989 started out as Showa 64; the sixty-fourth year of the reign of Emperor Hirohito. Then, Hirohito died of cancer only a week into the new year, on 7 January 1989. Suddenly, 1989 became Heisei 1, the first year of the reign of Emperor Akihito. The postmark date is Heisei 1, February 4. I'm guessing that the letter gave the actual dates of Megumi's visit, and Keiichi interpreted it as "this week" while he was reading aloud.

The beach retreat (chapter 13) is apparently during the short summer vacation which interrupts a school year rather than separating them. Urd shows up (chapter 14) soon after. The festival and . . . uh . . . pageant (chapter 15) . . . happen in late summer, which brings it back to their first anniversary, in October '89 (chapter 16).

(By the way, I suggest the word "meniversary" for a monthly milestone.)

One aspect of language and culture that I pay a lot of attention to is names. (What can I say, I'm an SCA herald.) **[When I lived in the Bay Area, I met a mead distiller, Mike Faul, who was doing a good trade with the SCA. I was dubious, because I was never a big fan of honey, but it's really quite a refined drink. Check out www.rabbitsfootmeadery.com. But only if you're Urd's age or older—CGH]**

As can be seen by the sign on Keiichi's bedroom door, the surname Morisato is typical of the peasant-type locatives created in 1870, when the 94% of the populace who'd been forbidden to have surnames were suddenly required to have them. It simply describes where his ancestors were living at the time, or had come from: *mori* "forest" + *sato* "village" = Morisato, "forest village."

(I haven't read anything that explicitly says so, but I can picture swarms of bureaucrats going out across the countryside. It would be at least as challenging a task as the Domesday Book in medieval England.) **[People take having a last name for granted, but it was also uncommon for the average person (i.e., a peasant) in early medieval Europe to have a last name—CGH]**

I was surprised when his personal name didn't show up until Sada spoke it, in chapter 2. As expected, the *ichi* part is "1," as in "firstborn." The *kei* kanji that his parents chose means "firefly." I think that fits in with a lot of other Japanese names that are variations on "bright," including most of the 250+ names that are pronounced "Akira." (The *bert* or *berto* element in some Western names of Germanic origin also means "bright," but the Europeans meant it as a metaphor for "famous"; I suspect the Japanese mean "lively.") **[I just checked the original Japanese again, and yes, it does appear Sada is the first to use "Keiichi." Otaku seem to be very familiar with him—CGH]**

Oh, and K1 isn't a nickname for Keiichi; it's shorthand. It's quick and easy to write, and most Japanese will pronounce it "Keiichi," the same as if it was written in

ideographic kanji or phonetic hiragana. Also, its clear and simple lines are easily distinguishable from a distance, making it a good choice to emblazon on his racing coveralls, as in the movie.

The name Belldandy has such an Anglo-French flavor that I never would have guessed that it's a cognate of the modern German word *werden*. Thanks for reprinting Toren Smith's essay.

The name of the temple they live in is Tariki Hongan. That's a phrase that can be translated as "salvation solely by divine benevolence." **[It should be noted that just like the Christian doctrine of "salvation by grace," there is a vast body of writing in Buddhism about what *tariki-hongan* actually means, and what it implies for the believer. However, in colloquial use in Japan, it definitely has the connotation of being saved by others, rather than by your own efforts—CGH]**

"Megumi" is written in hiragana instead of kanji. That option eliminates the common guessing game of choosing from among multiple pronunciations, but leaves the issue of meaning wide open to speculation. The *Collection* shows it as a single-kanji name that means "blessed" or "blessing" (or maybe "she blesses us").

Sayoko is *sa* "sand" + *yo* "night" + *ko* "child/girl," whatever that combination means. Mishima is *mi* "3" (or "third") + *shima* "island." Aoshima is "blue/green island." Toshiyuki is toshi "narrative" + yuki "origin."

Sada is "help" + "field." Kakuta is "corner field." Ozawa is *o* "big" + *sawa* "swamp."

In the original, Tamiya and Otaki aren't actually named until chapters 12 and 18, respectively. They were usually *sempai* ("upperclassman") or *ano hito* ("that person") or some such. Tamiya is *ta* "field" + *miya* "palace." His personal name is Toraichi; the *tora* is "first horary sign: tiger." It implies that he's not only firstborn, but he was born in a Year of the Tiger, like 1962. Otaki is "big waterfall." His personal name is never given.

I don't know yet if it ever shows up in the manga, but the anime has Tamiya and Otaki calling each other "Den-chan" and "Dai-chan." At first, those cutesy nicknames confused me. Then I realized that "den" is an alternate pronunciation of the "field" kanji, and "dai" is an alternate pronunciation of the "big" kanji. **[As a matter of fact, they *do* use those nicknames in the manga, as early as Vol. 3. In Vol. 14 (called "Queen Sayoko" or the original English version of the *OMG!* manga—they were rendered as "Tammy" (^_^) and "Ottie")—CGH]**

At the very beginning of the original manga, Keiichi is taking a message for "Aoyama-sempai" ("upperclassman Aoyama"), not Tamiya. In the one-frame flashback, Tamiya didn't tell him whom to take messages for, displaying the classic Japanese assumption that context is enough. Aoyama is apparently one of the other sempai in the Motor Club. But, since none of them are actually named any time soon, even Japanese readers may have been confused into thinking that Tamiya's name was Aoyama.

The translator seems to have tried to avoid that confusion by glossing over the mention of Aoyama's name. In the anime, which was also written after that confusion was resolved, Tamiya is identified early on; one of the chores he leaves Keiichi is to wait for a call that Aoyama "blue/green mountain") is expecting. **[The mysterious Aoyama is discussed a bit further in *Oh My Goddess! Colors*—CGH]**

Satoko is *sato* "village/hometown" + *ko* "child/girl." Yamano, in this case, is *ya* "arrow" + *ma* "pause" + *no* "valley"; a valley where you can pause between the arrows of war? From the attitude of Satoko's father, I wonder if it's a samurai name rather than a peasant name.

The most intriguing name is bound up with the setting: Nekomi. The kanji are clearly *neko* "cat" + *mi* "fruit." I can't find any such term as "cat-fruit" in any of my dictionaries or idiom guides. One interpre-

tation might be "kitten," but that's just wild speculation. Scattered throughout the manga and anime, there are feline logos obviously inspired by the name. One of those can be found on a bank in a recurring anime locale, the Nekomidouri Shoutengai, or Nekomi Street Shopping Area.

As to where Nekomi is: according to the address on the letter that Megumi delivers to Keiichi, Nekomi is a city in Chiba Prefecture. (Most of Chiba is a peninsula that encloses the eastern side of Tokyo Bay.) The weather report at the end of chapter 5 refers to snow blanketing Kanto, which is the "Eastern Region" that might also be thought of as Greater Tokyo. That's no help here; all of Chiba is included in Kanto. It's hard to be sure, but Nekomi doesn't seem to be on the shore of either the bay or the ocean. Other clues to narrow down the location will probably show up.

Obviously a college town, Nekomi is a (presumably fictional) outlying "suburb" of Tokyo, something like Forest Grove is to Portland, Oregon. But a "suburb" of one of the two largest cities in the world can be pretty large itself. Nekomi seems closer in size to Portland than Forest Grove.

One last topic is the placement of products and brand names that you've already pointed out some of. There are a lot of them, especially on Megumi's shirts. That's one more difference from the anime, which uses a widespread process I call "product *dis*placement." Familiar brand names and their logos are slightly altered into parodies of themselves. For example, there are Somy TV & VCR, NacDonald's restaurant, a Country 13 realtor, and Dack Daniel's whiskey. The only two product categories that seem immune to the process are weapons and vehicles. (For weapons, look at *City Hunter* or *Gunsmith Cats*.) Keiichi's motorcycle remains a BMW in the anime. Sayoko's Beemer becomes a Mercedes, but it's still a real brand.

Looking forward to the next volume,

Vincent Burch
Portland, OR

P.S. You said that *OMG!* is the second-longest-running manga in the U.S. I'm guessing the longest-running one was created by Rumiko Takahashi.

That's exactly right. The longest-running manga in the U.S. was Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma 1/2*, published by Viz. It has had a production history very similar to that of *Oh My Goddess!*—it first ran as a Western-style monthly comic book in 1992, and was collected into many graphic novels (in *Ranma's* case, up to Vol. 22) until in 2003 the monthly comic was cancelled and it switched starting with Vol. 23 to Japanese orientation, while at the same time going back and re-releasing the early volumes unflopped. The final volume of *Ranma 1/2* came out just recently; now the honor has passed to *Oh My Goddess!*

Speaking of 1994 (and of Viz), in lieu of our regular notes on old school *OMG!*, we have a special treat . . . with that same classic flavor! Thanks to the kind permission of Viz Media, LLC, we are reprinting the interview with Kosuke Fujishima that appeared in the February 1994 issue of *Animerica* magazine. Beginning in 1993 until the end of its run in 2005, *Animerica*, under the editorship of Trish Ledoux and later Julie Davis, was the first regular monthly professional anime and manga magazine in the United States.

Note that bracketed comments in bold are new for this 2006 re-printing, whereas the regular bracketed comments were from the original 1994 *Animerica* interview.

ANIMERICA: What made you decide to become a manga artist? Did you start as an assistant to anyone?

KOSUKE FUJISHIMA: I started because I love manga—or rather, I liked to draw and create stories. Actually, I think that manga was just the most familiar type of art to me, easily accessible to study and create. That may be closer to the truth. I think I could have gotten into animation just as easily. I was an assistant to Tatsuya Egawa for about a year and a half.

A: What was your debut work?
KF: When Mr. Egawa's *Be Free!* manga was going to be made into a live-action movie, I drew the "making of" movie story, called *Making Be Free!!* That was actually my debut work. But essentially, my first original work was *You're Under Arrest!* (*Taiho Shichauzo*). **[*Be Free!* was my favorite manga in high school. None of Egawa's manga have ever been published in English, but the anime *Golden Boy* is based on his manga of the same name. Note that Dark Horse published two volumes of *You're Under Arrest* in English. A police action-comedy, *YUA!* has a different feel from *OMG!*, but if you're a Fujishima fan you should definitely check it out—CGH]**

A: What's the good part of being a manga artist? And what's the not-so-good part?
KF: I can draw what I want to express and have that seen by many people. I've become what I most wanted to be, and there's nothing happier than that. On the other hand, the tough part about being a pro is that I have to go on doing it whether I feel like it or not. You can't always do what you want to do when you want to do it. Also, this might not be as important as other reasons but . . . well, manga artists don't have to commute to work [laughs].

A: If you hadn't become a manga artist, what do you think you might have become?
KF: I think I still would have become an artist. I don't think I could have gotten away from the fields of design and art. At this point, I can't think of anything else I would have done except become a manga artist.

A: Where did you get the inspiration for *Oh My Goddess!*?
KF: I thought it might be an interesting idea if being a goddess was a job, an occupation. I based it on Norse mythology, which is relatively unknown in Japan.

A: Do you have any spelling preferences for rendering the names of goddesses in English? I understand that in the United States, there's been some confusion . . .
KF: Well, Belldandy is spelled with a "B," even though the proper spelling in the actual Norse mythology is "Verdandi." Then there's Urd and Skuld; the spelling of those two names are unchanged.

A: Where do you stand on the animated version of *Oh! My Goddess*? What do you think of the quality of the OAV series? **[The original five-volume anime version of *OMG!*, currently available from www.animeigo.com. It shares the same director and character designer as the current TV series, but the characters in the OAV naturally appear different from the TV series, reflecting how Fujishima's style has changed over the past decade—CGH]**
KF: Well, it's based on my drawings, of course, so there are always going to be suggestions I could make as the author to improve it, to create new ideas, and to point out exactly where the animation deviates from my original ideas. But animation is the product of the animators, after all, so I just keep quiet so long as their creative intentions are obvious. Even if it's just a *little* different from the manga . . . well, let's just say that if the animation is going to end up being exactly the same as the manga, there's no point in animating it. I think the function of animation is best served when a work with a flavor different from the original comic

emerges, even though both the animation and the comic share the same universe. Quality-wise, I think the level of the *Oh My Goddess!* animation is considerably high. I worked on the storyboards for parts of the opening and parts of the ending of the third OAV volume, so I feel as though the animation is another part of me.

A: It's looking like the English versions of both the animation and the manga are going to be released soon. Do you have any thoughts on your work being seen in the U.S.?
KF: I don't know how well they'll be received, but I hope that the fans will support them. I never intended to create the story for an international audience, so I'm curious to see how people overseas will perceive it.

A: The number of anime and manga overseas is on the rise. Does this come as a surprise to you?
KF: The development of Japanese anime and manga is itself unique, and there are quite a few high-quality works, so I'd like to see them get greater circulation overseas. It would be nice if my works were included among them.

A: When the U.S. company releasing the animation announced their intention to call it "Oh My Goddess!" rather than "Ah! My Goddess," as had been printed in the manga all these years, a great debate started among fans over what the title should be. Which one best reflects your intentions, "Ah!" or "Oh". . . ?
KF: In terms of nuance, I think "Oh" probably comes closer. However it ends up, I think it should be rendered to make better sense in the language of the target country.

A: That's what usually has to happen when titles are brought over to another language. Kishiro's *Gunnm*, for example, became *Battle Angel Alita* in its English version. What about your own works? Do you have a preference one way or the other? How would you feel if the comic and animated versions came out with different titles overseas?
KF: If there's something that fits well in that language, I wouldn't complain. After all, there are movie titles that work much better once they're changed . . . although there are also those that *don't* work [laughs]. I would like to see that the titles of the comics and the animation stay consistent, however.

A: Since we're already on the general topic . . . how do you feel about flopped artwork? It seems as though this has become the standard for publications of manga in America.
KF: It's painful. I'm not that skilled an artist, and so when the artwork is flipped, all the shortcomings in my drawings become obvious. There's also an artistic consideration. Some panels lose the balance of their composition when they're flopped. If it were possible, I would prefer for everyone to be able to see the original version, the way I intended my artwork to be seen in the first place.

A: Is there anything in particular about the American fans of both your animated and manga work that you would like to know?
KF: Actually, I'd like to know what aspects of my work American fans are attracted to. I'm sure they must have a different perspective than Japanese fans. Cultural differences, most likely.

A: Let's talk a little about the *Oh My Goddess!* series. Which goddess is your favorite? Are there any aspects of their character, style, or fashion that you are particularly fond of?
KF: I don't really have a favorite, but . . . well, Urd is always outspoken and has more mature sensibilities, so I like her.

A: Speaking of fashion, your characters are always so beautifully dressed. Where do you get the ideas for the fashions in your comics?

KF: I study fashion quite a lot. Often, I find surprises in children's clothes. I'm always ready for a chance to study children and women's clothes at department stores.

A: As a manga artist, what are your work habits like? Do you work every day of the month? Are you a morning person? A night person . . .?
KF: I work almost every day, and I'm usually a night person. I don't pull that many all-nighters, however. I find that my drawing skills start going down the drain if I pull too many of those [laughs]. I try to leave a little free time in my schedule when I can help it.

A: How many assistants do you have?
KF: Six.

A: Do you ever have times when being a professional manga artist seems more trouble than it's worth, times when you feel discouraged?
KF: When I can't think up a story. When I can't draw the way I want to.

A: And what do you do to comfort yourself?
KF: I talk on the phone with friends. Talking to someone in the same business is best. When I see others going through the same thing, I'm comforted that I'm not alone, and I find courage in that.

A: Do you have any advice for fans who want to draw their own manga?
KF: Everyone's goals are different, so I can't make a blanket comment, but an artist basically draws manga to communicate an idea to others. The idea won't be communicated if the work is understandable only to its creator. It just won't work. I think the meaning of manga is to have it understood by as many people as possible.

A: It won't surprise you to hear that there are several publications devoted to comics journalism in America. Do you have your own "theory of manga"?
KF: As far as a theory goes, I guess I've already said it. To be successful, manga needs to be understood by as many people as possible. I have a certain interest in the nature of comics journalism, but I don't have a particular theory other than what I've already expressed.

A: In Japan, manga with highly violent and sexual content is often the target of criticism. Your manga doesn't come under this sort of scrutiny, however, perhaps because the stories are more "pure" and tend to revolve around adolescents What are your thoughts on sex and violence in manga? **[Although hardly extreme material, *You're Under Arrest* was definitely more fan-service oriented than *Oh My Goddess!*. Since *YUA!* was a seven-volume series, and at the time of the interview *OMG!* was only up to Vol. 9, it would have been perhaps more fair to say that Fujishima had moved in the direction of "pure" stories, rather than to suggest they were entirely representative of him—CGH]**
KF: One way of looking at it is that I haven't drawn any explicit sex and violence because it hasn't been necessary. It happens often enough in real life and besides, sex isn't something evil. I think pretending sex and violence doesn't exist only breeds ignorance. There are stories that actually require a certain amount of it to be successfully told. Of course, this is all assuming that the sex and violence isn't done gratuitously.

A: Is there something you keep in mind when you draw manga?
KF: I try to express at least one definite idea clearly. That's my goal.

A: What about the future? What kind of stories would you like to draw?
KF: Right now, for the indefinite future, I'm tied up with *Oh My Goddess!* After that,

who knows? I may end up continuing to draw adolescent stories. I'm also interested in stories which explore "male-bonding" friendships and situations.

A: Of all your other works, are there any in particular that you'd like your American fans to read?
KF: I only have two other works. *You're Under Arrest!* and *Striker*, so I guess the choice isn't too difficult. And even though I drew it from a different perspective, *Striker* was created with American comics in mind. Naturally, I'm interested in an American reaction. **[Since 1997, Fujishima has also become known for his character designs in the *Sakura Taisen* series. *Striker*, which apparently has never been collected in Japan, is understood to be a gonzo baseball story that ran occasionally in the weekly Kodansha magazine *Morning*—CGH]**

A: Let's talk about your hobbies. What sort of things do you enjoy doing? Do you have any favorite music, or favorite films?
KF: My favorite things are motorcycles, automobiles, airplanes, the sea. Reading. Plastic models. My favorite activities are sleeping, riding motorcycles, drawing pictures, and talking on the phone. My favorite music . . . well, I listen to everything. My favorite movies are *Streets of Fire*, *Blues Brothers*, *Das Boot*, *The Hidden*, and *Terminator 2*. I've also been getting into *Memphis Belle* a lot recently. I bought a sidecar recently—a German sidecar by the name Krauser Domani—and I'm pretty infatuated with that at the moment.

A: Are there any foreign countries you'd like to visit?
KF: Australia. America. Germany. But I'm most comfortable with Japan. I would like to see drag racing and air racing in America someday. The only problem is that I can't speak English [laughs].

A: Are you interested in mecha and robots? They don't appear much in your work, but . . .
KF: Sure, I like them very much. Real-life robots are doing wonderful things, and it's fun watching them do their work.

A: Any future plans relating to your leisure time?
KF: I'd like to become a pilot and fly by myself, but that's just not possible with the time I have. The sky is right there, but it's so far away. So I just lie down and watch the sky.

A: As we discussed a little earlier, anime and manga are becoming very popular overseas. There are even anime and manga conventions. Would you be interested in attending one day . . . ?
KF: Hmm, I wonder what sort of things they do there? I only hear rumors . . .

A: In closing, do you have a message for your English-speaking fans?
KF: If there's anyone out there who reads my manga and is inspired to become a comics artist because of it, then I would really be pleased. I wonder if there is anyone . . . ? [laughs]. One of my dreams is to become a world-class manga artist someday. If by some chance I ever achieve that, I would like my fans to be proud and say "I knew him when." You can count on me to try my best for both our sakes.

Special thanks to Syrian otaku Wa-L Masri, who explains that the Arabic on the cover of the Demons CD (p.60) is a conjugation of the verb "to do." The Arabic on the Gods CD (p.77) is just random letters, and the "Arabic" on the inside of the case (p.101) is just squiggles ^_^.

–CGH

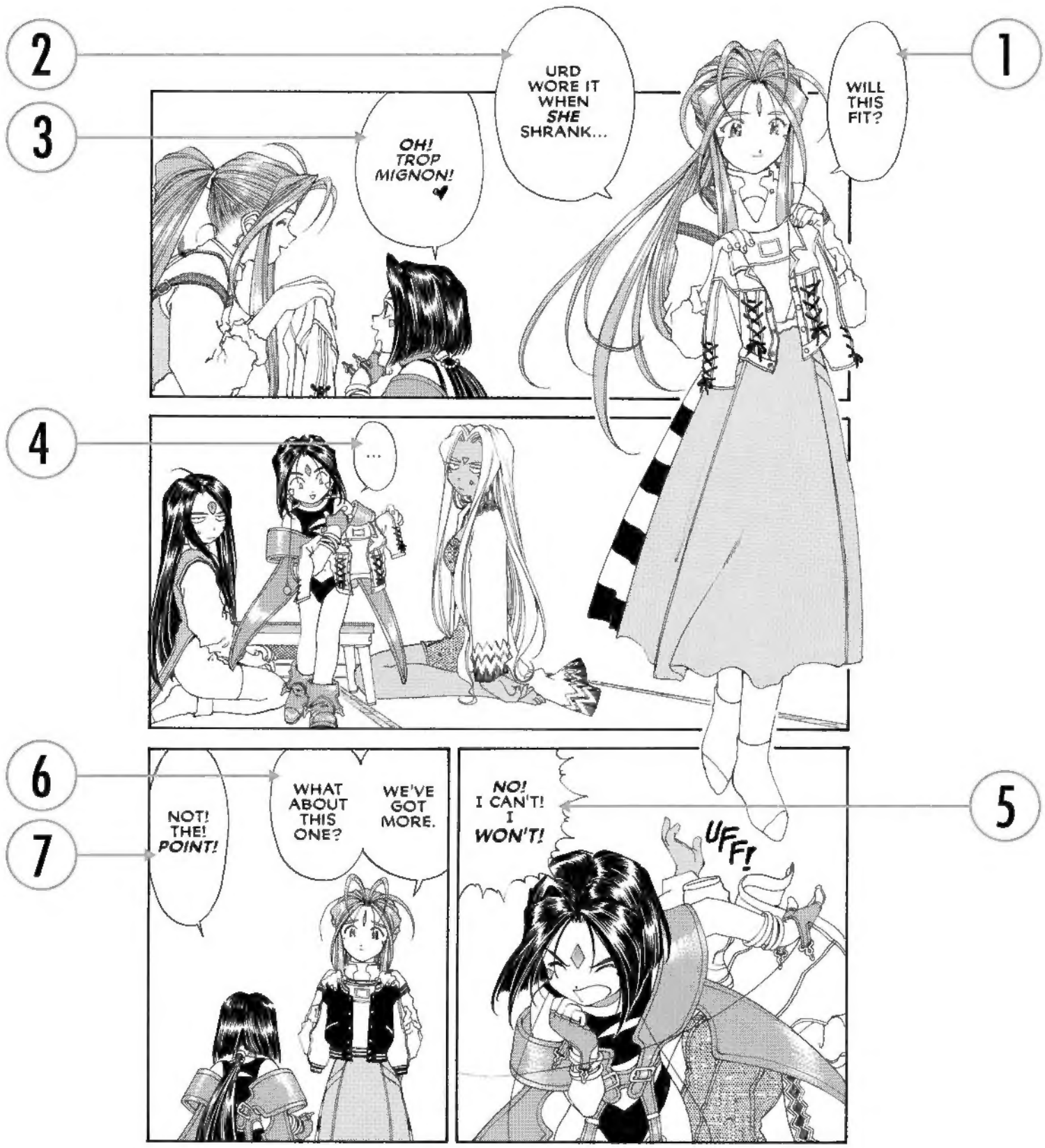
Creator Kosuke Fujishima in 1991!

His message to fans in the original Japanese *Oh My Goddess!* Vol. 4:

"Thank you so much for all your support! It's already been two years into the manga, and here I am at the fourth volume. Since I began I've moved from Higashi-Nakano to Kawasaki. I've exchanged my Suzuki GSX-R for a Harley. But one thing that hasn't changed is that I still don't get any bodily exercise. My only physical recreation is to walk around my apartment. With one of those step counters."

STOP! This is the back of the book!

This manga collection is translated into English, but arranged in right-to-left reading format to maintain the artwork's visual orientation as originally drawn and published in Japan. If you've never read comics this way before, take a look at the diagram below to give yourself an idea of how to go about it. Basically, you'll be starting in the upper right-hand corner, and will read each word balloon and panel moving right-to-left. It may take a little getting used to, but you should get the hang of it very quickly. Have fun! If this is the millionth manga you've read this way, never mind. ^_^



MANGA/HUMOR

Oh My Goddess!

ああっ女神さまっ 4

BELLDANDY'S BIG SISTER URD continues her campaign of naughtiness when she brews up a *luuuuuv* potion that, of course, goes horribly awry, affecting everyone but her poor intended target—Keiichi. But random passion in the streets may be the least of the gang's worries as a seemingly harmless CD proves to be a portal from the underworld, unleashing a demon that turns Keiichi into a *newt!* He gets better...

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